

**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN SHELTERS IN PROMOTING THE HUMAN
RIGHTS OF WOMEN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

by

ONNICAH OBAKENG MOKOAPE

**A mini-dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree**

**Master of Social Work
(Social Development & Policy)**

**In the Department of Social Work & Criminology
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

Supervisor: Ms. CM van der Berg

2019

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

Full name: Onnicah Obakeng Mokoape
Student number: 04421299
Research topic: The role of social services in shelters in promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence

I hereby declare that this research report is my work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination either at the University of Pretoria or any other university locally or internationally. All the sources used or cited have been indicated and acknowledged using a complete reference in accordance with the University requirements.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Onnicah Obakeng Mokoape', written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end.

Date: 08 July 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If this report is completed and submitted, then a prophecy has been fulfilled

- I want to thank God who has given me the strength to run this race to the end.
- I want to thank my mother for her unfailing love and continued support.
- I want to thank all the participants who were open enough to share their experiences.
- My most profound appreciation to my supervisor Ms. Corlie van der Berg for all the support, advice, and assistance. I would not have made it without her guidance.
- A big thank you to my classmate Alinah Lelope for her encouragement, motivation, and support.
- To the shelters providing social services, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity that was granted. This study would not have been possible without your participation.
- I want to thank all my family members (especially Mmathapelo Nkoane), friends, and associates who supported me throughout this journey.

With God all things are possible

ABSTRACT

Title:	The role of social services in shelters in promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence
Student:	Onnicah Obakeng Mokoape
Supervisor:	Ms. CM van der Berg
Department:	Social Work and Criminology
Degree:	MSW (Social Development and Policy)

Globally widespread violence against women of all classes appears to be the norm. This situation is a clear and specific example of the violation of their basic human rights. In South Africa, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 as well as South Africa's international commitments and obligations to end violence against women and children, catalysed the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. It is, however, trite that the enactment of legislation is not always the panacea to all social ills and in this case, domestic violence continues as a social phenomenon in South Africa society, despite the introduction of law and policy to curb its reach and subsequent effect on, particularly women.

Research supports the contention that the prevalence of domestic violence is due to an interplay between different factors such as individual, community, economic, cultural and religious factors occurring at different levels in the society. This intersection of causality results in a societal phenomenon that is difficult to control and reduce. Due to the rise in occurrence and consequences of domestic violence, both the United Nations and the World Health Organisation have declared violence against women as a violation of human rights.

Although the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights has championed itself as a foundation and powerful tool designed to fight all forms of oppression and ensure human dignity, there has always been a constant struggle to ensure that all human rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural) are equally guaranteed to women.

The human rights approach was thus used to explore the role of social services in the promotion of human rights for women exposed to domestic violence. This approach was useful because the White Paper for Social Welfare requires the inclusion of a rights-based approach in the delivery of social services.

This qualitative research was exploratory and descriptive. The research was applied, and a collective case study was used as a research design. Non-probability sampling was used to select a sample, and purposive sampling was followed. A total number of 12 participants were interviewed via one-to-one semi-structured interviews.

Empirical findings proved that the promotion of human rights through social services is taking place in shelters for women exposed to domestic violence. Much of this, however, results from the principles and values of the social work profession and not from the practice of human rights in and of its own right. Thus, the full comprehension and implementation of a human rights approach remain a challenge at some shelters.

The researcher ultimately recommends that a human rights approach should be adopted as a framework for guiding social services in this sector. A human rights culture should gain popularity and not only be assimilated through its incorporation within the values and principles of the social work profession. It should instead be an approach that exists in and of its own right; although admittedly, it cannot be divorced from the values and principles of the social work profession. Shelters should also adopt a feminist approach to dealing robustly with societal factors that lead to violence against women.

KEYWORDS

- Domestic violence
- Women exposed to domestic violence
- Feminism
- Shelters
- Human rights
- Human rights-based approach
- Human rights principles

- Developmental social welfare approach
- Social welfare services
- Social service professionals

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Widespread violence against women is a global phenomenon which impacts on their basic human rights. Domestic violence rates range between 20% and 30% in the majority of Northern regions (Mapp, 2012:262). In, inter alia, Australia, Israel, South Africa, and the United States, between 40% and 70% of female murders are committed by the victim's intimate partner (Mapp, 2012:262).

As indicated above, South Africa is no exception to violence against women. This is despite efforts to stop abuse against women through international awareness campaigns such as "16 days of activism for no violence against women and children", a campaign launched with the purpose of bringing awareness to the global prevalence of domestic violence phenomenon (Center for Women's Global Leadership, 2017:6). Disconcertingly, the South African Police Service (SAPS) recorded over 50 000 crimes committed against children and women in 2010 and 2011 (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012:9). De Beer (2007:6) contends that South Africa is the second most unsafe country out of 48 countries south of the Sahara.

Although crime accounts for some of the violence in South Africa, there is also a considerable number of violent incidents occurring in homes, usually committed by men and directed towards women (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:3). This view is supported by Barnett, Miller-Perrin, and Perrin (2011:2) who allude that while society has long viewed the family as a unit that provides a safe environment, the conditions have changed, and homes have turned into war zones. Resultantly, there is often an exodus of women from their homes into shelters seeking refuge from violence (Kostouros, 2008:34).

Due to the rise in occurrence and consequences of violence against women, both the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have declared violence against women as a violation of human rights (Mapp, 2012:260). Over the centuries, various women's movements in most regions in the world have progressed positively in addressing issues relating to the violation of women's human rights (Lockwood, 2006:55). However, Reilly (2009:116) argues that globally, enormous

challenges remain to achieve gender equality and human rights for women fully. Perhaps this is because in its evolution, the human rights regime focused mainly on the promotion of civil and political rights, and less on social and economic rights and global inequalities (Reilly, 2009:117).

The role of social services in promoting human rights becomes relevant, particularly within the South African context. This is because the country's developmental approach to social welfare evolved from its unique history of inequality and human rights violations due to colonialism and apartheid, and a long history of human agency and social action opposed to these conditions (Department of Social Development, 2013:13).

This study thus focused on how social services provided to women who have been exposed to domestic violence, in shelters, address the phenomenon through the promotion of human rights. This was necessary as the adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare required the inclusion of human rights practice in social service delivery (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997).

1.2 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following key concepts referred to in this study played a significant role in decoding and conceptualising violence against women within a human rights context.

1.2.1 Domestic violence

In terms of section one of the South African Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998, domestic violence is understood as “physical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; and any other controlling or abusive behaviour towards the victim.”

1.2.2 Women exposed to domestic violence

Women exposed to domestic violence are those who continuously experience any act of gender-based violence within families and communities, which is likely to lead to harm (Skinner, Hester & Malos, 2005:2).

1.2.3 Shelters

Shelters refer to facilities used for the provision of secure accommodation and protection of women experiencing domestic violence, which simultaneously render necessary social services to victims (Gierman, Liska & Reimer, 2013:6).

1.2.4 Social welfare

The White Paper for Social Welfare refers to social welfare as “an integrated and comprehensive system of social services, facilities, programmes, and social security to promote social development, social justice and the social functioning of the people” (RSA, Ministry of Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:5).

1.2.5 Social services

Social services refer to a wide spectrum of services ranging from those with a problem-solving focus to those with a social reform focus (Lombard, 2005:211).

1.2.6 Developmental social welfare

Developmental social welfare is the welfare system that has been widely influenced by social development (Gray, 2006:53), which emphasises developmental themes such as economic and social development, participation, and a rights-based approach (Patel, 2015:196).

1.2.7 Human rights

Human rights are referred to as the embodiment of ideas, legal guarantees, and actions in responding to any form of injustice by protecting and upholding the fundamental freedoms, entitlements, human dignity, and the rights of those subjected to afflictions (Huhle, 2010:6; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2006:1).

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was informed by two theories, namely feminism and the human rights-based approach. The two theories were used alongside each other in deliberating on issues of women exposed to domestic violence because the two approaches seek to advance and advocate for equality in all ranks of society.

1.3.1 Feminism

Feminism is a movement that aims to challenge the state of affairs related to the oppression and injustices against women, with a mandate to abolish it and replace it with a more equitable social order (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:235). The development of feminism involves a rich and diverse history distinguished by three waves (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:235). While the first wave challenged the notion of women’s exclusion from the political, social, public and economic sphere (Gillis, Howie & Munford, 2007:21); the second wave concerned itself with the domestic area by focusing on

issues of reproduction, mothering, sexual violence, expressions of sexuality, and domestic labour (Gillis et al., 2007:21). The third wave, originating from the late 1980s, is a more diverse and fragmented phenomenon than the first and second waves (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:236). Unlike the initial two waves that had specific issues of focus, the third wave seeks to challenge all forms of oppression at once; often resulting in more challenges than solutions (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:236). Nevertheless, the role of the third wave cannot be disregarded, as the combination of foci continues to be a valuable tool in fighting for the rights of the women worldwide.

The feminist framework stipulates that the occurrence of violence against women at various levels in society stems from a patriarchal setting where violence is normalised for men to preserve their privileged positions (Women's House Shelta, 2009:7). Feminist perspectives and theories are relevant within the context of domestic violence as they offer paradigmatic ways of understanding patriarchy (Orme, 2009:69); a culture that is at the root of domestic violence. Intervention from a feminist perspective entails working with women to create awareness about women's oppression and to overcome issues that stem from gender discrimination and stereotypes (Barker, 2003:161).

Feminism formed a useful lens in this study as it offers perspectives within which the position of women concerning issues of inequality, social injustice and oppression can be understood (Orme, 2009:65). Feminism continues to be relevant in addressing women issues because, although there have been slight changes in the manner in which women have been ill-treated, women continue to suffer at higher rates in comparison to men (Smith, Collins, Chodorow, Connell & Butler, 2011:314).

Feminism, however, cannot claim victory unless women of all classes can enjoy human rights. Thus, the human rights approach became another important lens in studying the context of women exposed to domestic violence.

1.3.2 Human rights-based approach

The promotion of human rights is a widely embraced goal, which facilitated its acceptance as a useful framework to address gender-based abuse (Lockwood, 2006:57). The human rights-based approach emerged to empower people regarding their rights so they can claim and enjoy these rights (Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC), 2009:11). The approach seeks to empower institutions and

professionals responsible for upholding human rights to respect vulnerable groups and allow them to make decisions and participate in human rights activities (SHRC, 2009:11).

The human rights-based approach seeks to challenge oppressive structures that serve as barriers to accessing human rights (Ife, 2012:225). To achieve this, the approach seeks to ensure that the standards and principles of human rights (that is, participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, empowerment, and legality) are practiced by organisations rendering services to vulnerable groups (SHRC, 2009:11; UNICEF, 2015:8).

The human rights-based approach informed the study by bringing forward the important principles (i.e., participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and legality) essential for the promotion of the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence. These principles were used as a framework in studying the development of human rights through social services, in the context of shelters for women exposed to domestic violence in South Africa.

1.4 PROBLEM FORMULATION

In constructing the research problem, the researcher studied statistics and previous studies that recorded and reported the prevalence and factors perpetuating violence against women, which led to a violation of their human rights. As early as 2002, Oguli-Oumo, Molokomme, Gwaba, Mogegeh, and Kiwala (2002:6) indicated that the actual number of domestic violence cases remains unknown, as the majority of victims never report the incidences. Thirteen years later, the same view was shared by the Institute for Security Studies (2015:1), arguing that the problem regarding domestic violence statistics remains unsolved, as some cases go unreported while others are recorded as assault as opposed to being correctly identified as domestic violence.

Previous studies have focused on either the causes and/or forms of abuse against women, or traditional ways of dealing with women exposed to domestic violence. However, there is a paucity of research concentrating exclusively on domestic violence and its impact on human rights. Further, Schuler, Bates, and Islam (2008:327) aver that there is little published research which focuses on contemporary and advanced responses to domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a human rights violation. The literature search undertaken by the researcher indicated a lack of research on this topic. A study by Skinner et al. (2005) comes close to the study executed for this dissertation but highlights only one aspect of human rights, namely participation. The study of Skinner et al. (2005) focused on the involvement of domestic violence survivors in services offered to victims of domestic violence. The results proved that agents meant to assist these vulnerable victims often inadvertently disempower women (Skinner et al., 2005:146). Ife (2012:11) posits a lack of clarity on what it means to practice from a human rights perspective. Patel (2015:198-199) therefore suggests that services offered to populations at risk should adopt a rights-based approach and thus incorporate human rights values and principles into service delivery.

Via this study the researcher sought to close the gap on the lack of information regarding domestic violence and human rights in South Africa, by exploring whether social services offered to women who have been exposed to domestic violence, focus on the promotion of the rights of service users, as articulated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). These women often experience secondary victimisation at the hands of authorities that should be assisting them, thereby having their rights further violated (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:2; UNICEF, 2012:34). It was therefore of interest, from a human rights perspective, to understand the nature of the social services that women who have been exposed to domestic violence are likely to receive from shelters. This was important as Ife (2012:10) contends that much of the academic debate about human rights remain at the theoretical level while less has been written about the practical implementation of human rights.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The study, therefore, aimed to answer the following research question:

How do social services rendered in and by shelters promote the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence?

1.5 RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 The goal of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore and discuss the role of social services in shelters in promoting the rights of women exposed to domestic violence in South Africa.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were:

- To contextualise the inclusion of human rights in the rendering of social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence, with specific reference to women living in shelters.
- To explore the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence regarding the promotion of human rights via social services rendered in shelters.
- To explore perceptions of social service professionals on the promotion of human rights through social services.
- To explore how human rights are promoted through social services in shelters for women previously exposed to domestic violence.
- To make recommendations for social professionals rendering social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence from a human rights perspective.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive explanation of research methodology, including research approach, type of research, research design, research methods, and ethical aspects, will be provided in Chapter Three.

The research approach was qualitative in nature with an exploratory and descriptive purpose (Fouché & Delpont, 2011:66), as it sought to answer how social service professionals promote the human rights of women through social services (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96). The study included perceptions of social service professionals on the promotion of rights as well as experiences of women exposed to domestic violence based on the services rendered in shelters. The necessity of an exploratory study of this nature stemmed from the researcher's view that there is insufficient research information available regarding the relationship between domestic violence and human rights in South Africa (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95; Schuler et al., 2008:327).

The type of research was applied in nature as the study sought to find a solution for problems in the field, by exploring the promotion of human rights through social services, in the context of shelters for women exposed to domestic violence (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94). The study followed a case study research design, and in particular, a collective case study, to collect data. Case study research design enabled the researcher to explore in depth, the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence in three different shelters in Tshwane (Creswell, 2009:13). The researcher was also able to explore the perceptions of social service professionals in these shelters, concerning social service delivery from a human rights perspective (Creswell, 2009:13).

The population of the study comprised women previously exposed to domestic violence, and social service professionals in three shelters situated in Tshwane. Non-probability sampling was used to select a sample, as it is useful in instances where there are uncertainties concerning the availability and size of the required sample (Babbie, 2013:128). Purposive sampling was employed, based on the researcher's judgment regarding participants who are most representative of the entire population (Babbie, 2013:128). The researcher conducted 12 semi-structured one-to-one interviews to gain a detailed picture of the women and social service professionals' experiences, beliefs, and/or perceptions of the promotion of human rights through social services (Greeff, 2011:351).

All ethical aspects taken into consideration during the study are discussed in Chapter Three.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The research study was conducted only in the Tshwane Municipal area, which forms the broader part of the Gauteng Province. Therefore, the research findings do not represent the Gauteng province as a whole.

No women exposed to domestic violence were available and/or willing to be interviewed in *Shelter 2*. Therefore, only the views from the social service professionals in this particular shelter were captured, without opinions from the service users.

1.8 CONTENTS OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report for the study consists of the following chapters:

Chapter One provides an introduction to the study. It is comprised of the definition of key concepts, theoretical frameworks, problem formulation, research question, goal and objectives of the study, a brief overview of the research methodology and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive literature review focussing on the conceptualisation of domestic violence and human rights. This includes the role of shelters in responding to domestic violence, as well as the promotion of human rights. The human rights approach as a framework is discussed in detail through contextualisation of human rights principles. The role of social service professionals, in the promotion of human rights, is included in the discussion.

Chapter Three comprises of research methodology, ethical aspects, and empirical findings presented in terms of themes and sub-themes.

Chapter Four attends to the key findings, as well as conclusions and recommendations. The chapter evaluates the extent to which the research goal and objectives were achieved.

CHAPTER 2

THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH SOCIAL SERVICES IN SHELTERS FOR ABUSED WOMEN: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview on the nature and meaning of domestic violence as a violation of human rights, as well as a discussion of social services rendered at shelters to women exposed to domestic violence. Any form of violence that triggers fear, either at a domestic or societal level, cannot be accepted as it is a violation of human rights (Keeling & Mason, 2008:2). Morsink (2010:35) asserts that we are continuously confronted by images of those who die from human rights violations. Carlson and Listhaug (2007:465) report that every year millions of people around the world suffer as the result of human rights violations. These scenarios have fostered debates about human rights and have led to the rise in human rights movements (Morsink, 2010:35). It is believed that the concept of human rights, in relation to violence, is a field that requires investigation to gain insight into how human rights are perceived and practiced (Carlson & Listhaug, 2007:465).

While there are different forms of violence occurring at various levels, the focus of this literature study will be limited to violence directed towards women under the phrase “domestic violence”. This is not to disregard violence against men, but while both men and women may experience violence, it is generally acknowledged that women are far more vulnerable and carry a greater burden in this regard (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:6). The Columbia Law School (2010:16) echoes this view by arguing that although the term domestic violence is understood to be inclusive of violence directed towards men or women, it is mostly perpetrated by men against women.

While the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa saw with it the beginning of women redefining their power, there are still obstacles such as domestic violence violating women’s human rights and hindering their advancement of full power (Britton, 2006:145). This is an alarming issue since the concept of human rights should be an integral and fundamental component of democracy (Jain, 2006:143). In South Africa, domestic violence prevails in the face of democracy (Britton, 2006:145). Kjaerum

(2010:19,21) concurs that democracy cannot be claimed in absentia of human rights because the two complement each other.

In deliberating on the promotion of human rights for women exposed to domestic violence, legislation on domestic violence is a point of departure followed by the prevalence of domestic violence at both global and local level. Subsequently, factors contributing to domestic violence, as well as the consequences and impact thereof, will be discussed before shifting to an examination of domestic violence shelters.

Thereafter, the focus will turn to discuss the significance of human rights within the domestic violence context by providing a conceptual overview and background of human rights, and domestic violence as a violation of human rights. This will be followed by an examination of the human rights agenda within the South African context, which discusses the country's commitments at the international and regional level, as well as practical implementation within the domestic milieu. Locally, the emphasis will be on human rights legislation and the role of social welfare services in upholding human rights. The last section will cover the scope of social service delivery by looking at human rights practice principles, the role played by social service professionals in promoting human rights, and the challenges hindering human rights in practice. The chapter will be concluded with a summary related to the literature discussed.

2.2 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This section focuses on the Domestic Violence Act (DVA) by examining the objectives of the Act as well as its flaws. This particular legislation is relevant to the discussion as it plays a vital role in combating violence experienced by women. The discussion will also cover the prevalence of domestic violence, both on the global and local level, factors contributing to domestic violence, as well as the consequences and impact of domestic violence on women. The latter is examined to build an argument that women are more susceptible to violence, and therefore more likely to experience a violation of human rights. The last part will focus on the role of domestic violence shelters in responding to violence against women, as they often find themselves homeless due to domestic violence.

2.2.1 The Domestic Violence Act

In South Africa, the Domestic Violence Act (116 of 1998) serves as legislation to regulate different forms of violence within domestic relationships. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, as well as the international commitment and obligations to end violence against women and children, drove the adoption of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998. The Act is committed to the elimination of violence by affording victims maximum protection as well as introducing measures, which seek to ensure that the relevant organs of the state give full effect to the provisions of the Act (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998). The DVA is viewed as a progressive law (Mogstad & Dryding, 2016:5) and while it provides a clear mandate in terms of stipulating steps to be taken in protecting victims, there are certain flaws in its implementation (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), 2016:13).

2.2.2 Flaws in the Domestic Violence Act

While many countries have progressed well in introducing and adopting legislation on violence against women, there remains a challenge in the implementation (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:82). The same is true for the DVA in South Africa. One of the challenges with the DVA is that the majority of victims do not know about the protection provided by the Act (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:8). Furusa and Limberg (2015:2) find the DVA to be theoretically sound but practically challenged. In their analysis, they have found the DVA to be lacking in terms of providing concrete safety measures, as it only offers victims protection on paper in the form of a protection order (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:2).

While a protection order should play a major role in providing protection, the CSVR (2016:14) has discovered that it has led to unintended consequences wherein women feel that it puts them at more risk of violence by stimulating anger and rage in perpetrators. Payne and Wermeling (2009:3) find the idea of a protection order to be frustrating, as action by the police can only be taken once the particular order has been violated thus not guaranteeing any pre-emptive form of protection to victims.

There is existing research that shows that most victims have not received effective protective results from the DVA (Mogstad & Dryding, 2016:5). Furusa and Limberg (2015:8) attribute this to the fact that the DVA only criminalises the violation of a protection order and not the act of domestic violence itself. It is for this reason that

cases of domestic violence prevail even in the face of the DVA, and this warrants fair criticism towards the Act (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:2). The next section looks at the prevalence of domestic violence at the global and local level as this particular form of violence is on the rise despite legislative measures.

2.3 PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

2.3.1 Global trends

Over the years, there have been a growing number of studies reporting on the prevalence of domestic violence across the world (WHO, 2013:4). In 2011 the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence survey, conducted in the United States of America (USA), showed that a high number of women in the USA have experienced some form of violence within the domestic setting at some point in their lives (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014:15).

Global studies show that Africa is in the lead with 45,6% of women experiencing some form of violence, in comparison to a worldwide average of 35% (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:6). This claim was further supported by a study undertaken by the WHO, which showed that out of the 79 countries, Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia recorded the highest prevalence of domestic violence (WHO, 2013:16).

2.3.2 Local trends

South Africa is one of the countries worldwide where domestic violence is rife (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:2). Statistics South Africa alludes to this claim and further stipulates that while violence is a global concern, it is important to highlight the fact that the dynamics of violence in South Africa are complex and unique, having been moulded by the apartheid regime (Statistics South Africa, 2016:1). The transition of South Africa to democracy saw with it the genesis of resistance towards the traditional and cultural views of masculinity (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:3). This led to a high prevalence of domestic violence in the country as men felt disempowered and irrelevant in the domestic sphere, thus resorting to violence to reclaim their position (Wood, Lambert & Jewkes, 2008:47).

Though there are no official statistics in South Africa that regularly provide information on domestic violence (CSV, 2016:5), various disciplines in the country have engaged in research centred on domestic violence, and all reported a significant prevalence of the phenomenon (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:2). Thorpe (2014:4) maintains that domestic

violence in South Africa is rapidly on the increase and to some extent normalised. This claim is illustrated by statistics reported by the South African Police Services (SAPS) and Victims of Crime Survey (VOCS) 2014/15, which reflect an increase in the rate of violent crimes (Statistics South Africa, 2016:1).

On the other hand, the Institute for Security Studies (2015:1) argues that there is a challenge in domestic violence statistics in South Africa, emanating from the fact that domestic violence is not a criminal offense in itself and as such, cases of domestic violence are often recorded as cases of assault. It is, therefore, a challenge to truly understand the extent of the problem (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:15) and to design effective intervention strategies to address it (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:8).

There are other problems leading to challenges in assessing the level of violence, such as a high number of unreported cases (Britton, 2006:146). Under-reporting is perpetuated by the fact that victims know the perpetrators, or due to a lack of confidence in the police (Institute for Security Studies, 2015:1) as well as secondary victimisation at the hands of the authorities (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:7). The problem with under-reporting is that it perpetuates violence, as the perpetrators are never held accountable for their acts and this leads to continuous violent behaviour (Mpani & Nsibande (2015:7).

Overall, domestic violence is a growing problem, which afflicts women and places a heavy financial burden on the state, which persists despite the introduction of policies and legislation to curb it (Thorpe, 2014:4). To provide a more in-depth understanding of the prevalence of domestic violence, some of the perpetuating contributing factors thereof will be discussed in the next section.

2.4 FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence is seen as emanating from an interplay between various factors (such as individual, community, economic, cultural and religious) having an influence at different levels in the society (CSVN, 2016:2). While there is no single factor that can be labelled as the main cause of domestic violence, there is a consensus that certain distinguishable factors increase woman's vulnerability to violence (Barnett et al., 2011:5; Keeling & Mason, 2008:39) as will be discussed below.

2.4.1 Structural factors

There are structural factors that condone violence in families through unequal power, where men possess power over women (Barnett et al., 2011:5). The issues of power and control have always perpetuated different forms of violence including women abuse (Davis, 2008:23). Findings by Payne and Wermeling (2009:2) demonstrate that the indoctrination of patriarchy in society contributes to domestic violence by endorsing male power as the highest authority in a power hierarchy. Unfortunately, through generations, women continue to succumb to this distorted truth and thus remain in abusive relationships (Payne & Wermeling, 2009:3).

2.4.2 Idealisation of family and cultural beliefs

Domestic violence is widely driven and perpetuated by the normalised cultural and societal expectations that violate women's rights (Matope, Maruzani, Chauraya & Bondai, 2013:192). Violence is often perpetuated by the idealisation of the family and cultural beliefs where violence is accepted and where the cultural activities encourage men to view themselves as superior to women (Barnett et al., 2011:5,6). In worst cases, women have gone as far as minimising their injuries due to the fear of being viewed as disobedient, thus accepting violence as a cultural norm (Keeling & Mason, 2005:3).

2.4.3 Cultural practices

While there are cultural practices that yield positive rewards, there are also those that are harmful, especially towards women and children (Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014:28). Normalised cultural practices such as *lobola* and *ukuthwala* embraced by different cultures place women at a higher risk of being violated (CSV, 2016:8). While it has been proven that these practices violate human right treaties, the practices continue to be carried out in the greater parts of Africa (Maluleke, 2012:2).

2.4.3.1 Lobola

The majority of marriages in the greater parts of Africa are based on the practice of lobola (Matope et al., 2013:192). This is a practice where the bridegroom pays a price to the bride's family in a monetary form or through other means, as deemed reasonable by the negotiating parties (CSV, 2016:8). This practice builds a toxic foundation in the marriage since the bride cannot be part of the negotiations and shall, therefore, remain powerless in the marriage with power resting on the husband since

he paid the bride price (Matope et al., 2013:193). A study by Dworkin, Colvin, Hatcher, and Peacock (2012:107) demonstrates how men perceive lobola as a practice that grants them the right to treat women as they desire, even if this violates the women's rights.

2.4.3.2 Ukuthwala

Ukuthwala, also known as forced marriage, is a cultural practice where a man abducts a young girl or woman with the purpose of persuading her family to give her away to him in marriage (Maluleke, 2012:11). This practice contravenes Article 16 (2) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates that "marriage shall be entered into only with the free will and full consent of intending spouses" (UN, 2015:34). Mathews and Benvenuti (2014:28) perceive this act as barbaric and as a violation of human rights as women lose control over their sexuality by being forced into marriage.

2.4.4 Substance abuse and history of physical and child abuse

Perpetrators of domestic violence are often found to engage in different forms of substance abuse (CSV, 2016:2). This is a concern because South Africa has been declared one of the highest alcohol consuming countries in Africa, which has a direct impact on the perpetuation of domestic violence (Mpani & Nsiband, 2015:6). On the other hand, studies show that children who grow up in families where abuse was prevalent, are more likely to suffer again as adults or become perpetrators thereof (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014:2; Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014:29-30; Matope et al., 2013:196). Furthermore, a woman with a history of physical or sexual abuse is more likely to engage in an unhealthy relationship characterised by violence (Keeling & Mason, 2008:40).

2.4.5 Social tolerance, acceptance of violence and economic factors

There is an elevated level of social tolerance and acceptance of violence in societies wherein women are depicted as the weaker vessels and often as sex objects (Barnett et al., 2011:6). Of greater concern is the fact that women repeatedly accept the abuse as a way of life due to their lower societal status (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:7; Mapp, 2012:262). Women's economic vulnerability makes it impossible for them to escape their domestic situation, thereby forcing them to embrace the abuse (Reichert, 2012:447). This issue of dependency is problematic and affirms the human rights view

that a lack of economic stability can impede the realisation of human rights (Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, 2006:2).

Consequently, women's high economic status places them at risk of abuse as this status threatens men's superior position (CSV, 2016:12). This, therefore, raises a concern as to whether women can enjoy human rights in all entirety with all the issues surrounding their vulnerability and especially considering how both their low and high economic status places them at risk of being victimised.

These factors are troubling, as they function at all levels of life (i.e., individual, community, societal levels) making it a challenge for women to break free as they are confronted from all directions (Mpani & Nsiband, 2015:18-21). The next section discusses the consequences and the impact of domestic violence on victims to understand the extent to which violence is a violation of women's human rights.

2.5 THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON WOMEN

While the previous section focused on the possible factors leading to domestic violence, this section focuses on the consequences and impact of domestic violence, to further the argument that domestic violence violates women's human rights.

The impact and consequences of domestic violence are generally devastating for both the survivor and the family (Keeling & Mason, 2008:3). A report by the WHO (2014:2) indicates that since 2000, an estimated 6 million people across the world have died from violence, including domestic violence. The impact is far worse than the actual act of violence, leaving women with internal scars, lasting a lifetime (Buzana, Buzana & Stark, 2012:47).

Buzana et al. (2012:47) claim that of the total population suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the survivors of domestic violence constitute a large number. Domestic violence hurts women's health particularly their sexual and reproductive functioning (Mpani & Nsiband, 2015:29). The percentages of women who sustained permanent injuries from the physical assault and sexual assault are approximately 41.5% and 36.2% respectively (Buzana et al., 2012:46). Physical abuse is more likely to result in mental impairment (Buzana et al., 2012:47). The following additional health effects occur because of domestic violence:

Beyond physical injuries, the health effects of violence include disabilities, depression and suicide, induced abortion, low birth weight,

premature birth, high-risk sexual behaviours, alcohol and drug abuse, behaviours that link experiences of violence to heart disease, stroke, cancer, and a host of chronic and infectious diseases and early death (WHO, 2014:2).

Violence thus jeopardises the ability to play a role in economic and social development by removing energy and bruising confidence (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:8). The WHO (2014:2) attests that women's deteriorating health leads to poverty in various communities as it slows down their economic development through absenteeism from work, job losses, and low productivity. The problem stems from the fact that not all employers understand the nature and extent of this phenomenon, with the majority failing to provide the necessary support (Payne & Wermeling, 2009:3).

Because of the economic loss, abused women may end up homeless or experience difficulties to secure and maintain housing, which can be seen as one of the consequences surrounding this form of violence (Ross, 2010:103). Melbin, Sullivan, and Cain (2003:2) identify the inability to afford housing as one of the long-term effects abused women experience in an attempt to break free from their abuser. These claims are supported by a statement made by De Beer (2014:3) which strongly suggests that domestic violence may lead to situational homelessness, a state where people become homeless due to a number of factors such as domestic violence or abuse, immigration and migration; and people released from prison or a psychiatric hospital with no place to go.

A study by Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG) revealed that in 2012 and 2013 the South African government spent an estimated R 28.4 billion and R 42.4 billion respectively on the provision of different services offered to domestic violence victims (CSV, 2016:15). In conclusion, the impact and the consequences of domestic violence are very costly (CSV, 2016:15) and without assistance and financial support, it is almost impossible for women to leave abusive partners (Ross, 2010:103). Unfortunately, for most women, the fact that the perpetrators are often the sole providers, has major implications for their fate, especially in the absence of immediate remedial services (Reichert, 2012:447).

Looking at the complexity of the consequences, and the impact of domestic violence, it can be understood why this form of violence is perceived as a violation of human rights and why it mainly affects women (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:29). The researcher agrees with Ife (2012:183) who suggests that human rights practice should be

understood as an on-going and ever-changing discourse, as human beings exist in an ever evolving world where their rights are continuously under threat in the face of the ever-changing global economy.

Given these consequences, Payne and Wermeling (2009:4) emphasise the importance of social services in response to the needs of victims in need of help. Mpani and Nsibande (2015:30) suggest that such social services should be comprehensive and include support such as shelters, as well as accessibility to all the necessary psychosocial services. The focus will thus turn to the social services rendered by shelters for abused women to explore the progress concerning the promotion of the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence.

2.6 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS

Across the world, governmental organisations and shelters are faced with a considerable task of responding to the needs of the women who encounter challenges in their effort to escape abusive partners (Stensrud, 2005:2). While a decision to escape minimises the chances of being abused, it at the same time increases the risk of becoming homeless (Ross, 2010:106). In Australia, there is a growing number of homeless women and children resulting from domestic and family-related violence (Tually, Faulkner, Cutler & Slatter, 2008:1). In the USA, a high number of homeless women have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives, and for some, it was the main cause of their homelessness (Columbia Law School, 2010:42).

Domestic violence shelters have become one of the major public services offered to women seeking protection from the perpetrators of domestic violence (McFarlane, Symes, Maddoux, Gilroy & Koci, 2014:2749-2750). These shelters play a significant role in ensuring continuous safety for the victims and providing other necessary resources. This is required, as the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (2006:2) contends, and without the necessary resources such as those offered by the shelters, the promotion of human rights for abused women cannot be fully realised.

Since domestic violence was initially perceived and treated as a private matter, there was little help available in the public domain for victims (Keeling & Mason, 2008:3). It was for this reason that the refuge movement emerged to provide shelter for abused women, while at the same time confronting the idea that domestic violence should not

be relegated as a private matter (Keeling & Mason, 2008:3). Since then, shelters have gained popularity and are of immense help, especially those that promote sustainable exit strategies in assisting women trying to separate from the abusive partners (Lyon, Lane & Menard, 2008:4).

In the era of emergence, the services offered by the shelters were mostly limited to the provision of beds and short-term support (Lyon et al., 2008:22). At present, shelters provide services in but not limited to accommodation, psycho-social support, skills development, health, and legal matters (Watson & Lopes 2017:5). Services rendered by the shelters offer a variety of benefits, such as saving women from prostitution as well as petty crimes as a means of survival; assistance with relevant documentation ensures that women benefit from social welfare services; access to health care improves women's wellbeing and access to legal services empowers women to become aware of their legislative rights (Lopes, 2013:5; Stone, Watson & Thorpe, 2013:6). Moreover, shelters promote women's economic empowerment through skills development programmes (Lopes, 2013:5). De Beer (2014:3) perceives a variety of services to be critical as solutions to address homelessness cannot be undertaken in isolation, but should take on a holistic approach by exploring dimensions such as the psychosocial, economic, spatial, physical, political and the spiritual aspects that define people and life.

Shelters thus play a key role in implementing Article 25 (1) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights which advocates for basic human needs, which include shelter, especially under the circumstances beyond one's control as is the case with victims of domestic violence (UN, 2015:52). In general, shelters have proved to be an essential resource in responding to domestic violence and the subsequent homelessness crisis (Melbin et al., 2003:2). The next section focuses on the scope of shelters within the South African context.

2.6.1 Scope of domestic violence shelters in South Africa

In South Africa, shelters fall under the domain of what is referred to as the National Government Victim Empowerment Programme which is one of South Africa's key crime intervention strategies (Bhana, Vetten, Makhunga & Massawe, 2012:7; Lopes 2013:1).

2.6.1.1 Victim Empowerment Programme

The National Policy Guideline for Victim Empowerment refers to victim empowerment as a programme that seeks to link victims of crimes (including domestic violence) with the resources and services necessary to address the consequences caused by the crime (Department of Social Development, 2009:3).

The aim of the Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) is to empower victims in such a way that they can move forward from the harm caused by crime or violence by creating an environment that ensures that no further harm will be experienced (Department of Social Development, 2009:3). The scope of the VEP is targeted at "...women, victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual abuse and rape, abused children, abused older persons, abused people with disabilities, victims of human trafficking, victims of hate victimisation, farm workers and dwellers, and ex-combatants" (Department of Social Development, 2009:10-12).

The effectiveness of services rendered to the victims to some extent depends on the skills of the staff and their knowledge regarding the implementation of the VEP. Shelters are one of the tools used to implement the VEP services as per the expectations of the National Policy Guideline on Victim Empowerment. The discussions will, therefore, turn to the challenges faced by shelters in responding to the needs of women exposed to domestic violence.

2.6.1.2 Challenges faced by shelters in rendering social services

In South Africa, the existence and effectiveness of shelters are under continuous threat resulting from a lack of regulation in terms of legislation, lack of funding, staff turnover and inadequate space (Lopes, 2013:1).

Although the VEP champions itself to respond to the needs of domestic violence victims, the programme has been criticised by Bhana et al. (2012:9) for failing to attend to the needs of abused women. This failure results from the fact that there is no framework that links the VEP to the Domestic Violence Act (Bhana et al., 2012:9). In its evaluation of the VEP, Western Cape Department of Social Development (2014:12) states that because there is no legislation in place to enforce the VEP, it is difficult to implement the programme, as there is no government department that can be held accountable for the provision of VEP services.

Although shelters are considered to be a critical strategy in addressing the domestic violence crisis, there is little commitment by the state to ensure that these services are well funded (Stone et al., 2013:3). Lack of funding is identified as the leading factor in the challenges faced by shelters in rendering services to women exposed to domestic violence (Bhana et al., 2012:66; Stone et al., 2013:3), inevitably leading to closure or reduction of services (Watson & Lopes, 2017:6). The Department of Social Development has alluded to the challenges faced by the VEP and in particular raised the issue of an inadequate budget as the main hindrance in ensuring implementation of the programme (Bhana et al., 2012:7). Several authors such as Bhana et al. (2012:1), Lopes (2013:1), Stone et al. (2013:2) as well as Watson and Lopes (2017:3) stipulate that a major challenge stems from the fact that the DVA does not indicate whose financial responsibility it is among government departments, to carry the financial costs of shelters.

Shelters generally require personnel such as managers to perform administrative duties; social workers, auxiliary social workers, and care workers to render social services; as well as security officers to provide safety measures (Watson & Lopes, 2017:6). However, there is no legislation in place that dictates the staff structure of shelters. In a study conducted by Bhana et al. (2012) among five shelters housing women in Gauteng, their findings on the staff composition differed from shelter to shelter. Generally, the employment of required staff is not possible thus leaving individuals to perform multi-tasks (Watson & Lopes, 2017:6). Most shelters have difficulties in recruiting and retaining enough staff due to financial constraints (Lopes, 2013:4).

Another common challenge faced by shelters has to do with adequate space. In 2013, two shelters in Cape Town, namely the Sisters Incorporated and St. Anne's Home, were reported to have turned away 45 and 48 women respectively, because the shelters were full (Stone et al., 2013:5). The issue of limited space is prevalent, despite commitments made by the Department of Social Development in Parliament in 2009, that more shelters will be established over a period of five years (Lopes, 2013:2).

The Gender Advocacy Programme views the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the programme as the main cause of failure in responding to the victims of domestic violence (Bhana et al., 2012:9-10). With these challenges in place, the focus will now

turn to the challenges faced by women exposed to domestic violence across the world in accessing and receiving social services in the shelters.

2.6.2 Challenges women face in shelters

The idea of a shelter might initially appear a straightforward solution, but there are numerous challenges that women experience once they access shelters (Stensrud, 2005:2). The most familiar challenges faced by the women in different shelters revolve around the issue of privacy as well as the implementation of shelter rules (Lyon et al., 2008:13). Findings by Stensrud (2005:13) revealed that women felt that it was important for shelters to prioritise the issue of privacy by ensuring that accommodation has enough rooms and storage facilities where valuables can be kept.

The most common problems found by Lyon et al. (2008:13-14) included "...conflict with other residents; transportation; lack of privacy; shelter rules - including time limits, curfew, and chores; customs not respected; limits on sheltering teen boys; issues with food; using the telephone." The issue of visitation hours was mentioned as another challenge women experience (Ross, 2010:105). Women are often forced to belong to support groups as part of the rules, and this frequently leads to a rushed healing process (Ross, 2010:105). For those with children, their stay at a shelter usually does not serve its purpose, as most shelters do not offer child-care services (Stensrud, 2005:19). Instead of concentrating on the healing process, these women find themselves having to give more attention to their children and thus miss empowerment opportunities (Stensrud, 2005:19).

Davis and Srinivasan (1995:63) found that women who encountered shelter services felt that certain rules violated their space, and to some extent reinforced society's views that abused women are incapable of making their own decisions. Consequently, women often exit shelters prematurely, as the rules and expectations are found to be extremely exhausting, contrary to their beliefs and disruptive to their normal routine (Melbin et al., 2003:7).

Another challenge is that women are sometimes turned away because shelters are at times full and unable to cater for more cases (Columbia Law School, 2010:43). Women exposed to domestic violence are often excluded from accessing shelters due to strict intake criteria, which include age, number of children and their gender, citizenship status, mental health, and history of substance abuse (Ross, 2010:105; Watson &

Lopes, 2017:5). Watson and Lopes (2017:5) view this as a gap that needs immediate attention, taking into consideration that domestic violence cuts across women of all classes. Even in cases where women can access shelters, this type of housing arrangement is only provided on a short-term basis (Melbin et al., 2003:2). The issue of lack of housing thus calls for recognition and debate on women's rights to housing as they experience a wide range of obstacles in an attempt to secure their own space (Columbia Law School, 2010:44).

While shelters provide women with safety and economic opportunities during their stay, this is only a temporary remedy, as their safety can never be guaranteed when they leave the shelter (Stensrud, 2005:13). Most shelters offer accommodation for between three to six months with a possibility of extension under exceptional circumstances (Watson & Lopes, 2017:5). Social workers argue that the period of accommodation offered is insufficient to prepare women to exit abusive relationships and establish new housing arrangements (Watson & Lopes, 2017:5). As such, Payne and Wermeling (2009:4) suggest a need for shelters to put measures in place to ensure full transition opportunities and not only short-term remedies.

Inarguably, these challenges serve as a barrier to the realisation of women's human rights, a theme that will be discussed in the next section, particularly within the context of domestic violence.

2.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONTEXT

Discussions under this section will include an overview and background on human rights and domestic violence as a phenomenon that violates women's human rights.

2.7.1 Overview and background on human rights

Historically, the human rights discourse was shaped by the European Enlightenment thinking in the 18th century, which criticised reliance on the Bible as a moral stance, due to the issue that different religious bodies gave contrasting interpretations of the scriptures (Ife, 2012:6). This proposition is believed to have played a massive role in shaping the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (Ife, 2012:7-8).

The Declaration originated in response to two major brutal events in history, that is, Nazi Germany crimes and the Second World War, and it remains relevant to the present day (Huhle, 2010:6; Kjaerum, 2010:20). In its foreword, the UN (2015)

perceives the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a foundation and powerful tool designed to fight all forms of oppression to human dignity. During the 60th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2008, conferences and events held across the world affirmed the relevance of the Declaration (Huhle, 2010:6). The recent 70th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights held in 2018, once again highlighted that the Declaration is still being upheld and considered an important document to the promotion of human rights.

However, as early as 1947 the American Anthropological Association criticised the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, arguing that it was based on a Western context and thus perceived to be unsuitable and inapplicable to most parts of the world (Morsink, 2010:30). This view is however understood to be short-sighted as history records the presence of delegations from across the world with different political, cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds at the discussions that led to the Declaration (Morsink, 2010:31). Without disregarding its remarkable achievements in recent times, Ife (2012:16) states that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights cannot and should not be seen as representing the universal and unchanging human rights truths. Despite these remarks, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights made a path for all the nations to uphold and promote human rights for all people (Meernik, Aloisi, Sowell & Nichols, 2012:241). Contemporarily many nations promote and safeguard human rights through legally guaranteed rights found in national constitutions, government policies, and international treaties (Meernik et al., 2012:241).

However, there is a challenge in terms of fully pinning down the definition of human rights (Ife, 2012:19). Carlson and Listhaug (2007:466) make a similar claim by mentioning that there is little agreement in terms of defining human rights and this creates difficulties when trying to study the concept systematically. Nevertheless, what cannot be denied is the fact that the idea of human rights is a powerful one, appealing to all the nations that seek to promote a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world (Ife, 2012:10). Historical developments such as democracy, the rule of law, and the advancement of social and economic justice; shaped, nourished and created fertile ground for the advancement of the human rights concept (Kjaerum, 2010:19). Historically and culturally, and through further development of their philosophical,

religious, ethical, and political movements; human rights are a response to the injustices experienced, especially by individuals and groups who are to some extent extremely powerless and helpless (Staub-Bernasconi, 2011:31).

In general, there are different rights enjoyed by all people across the world such as the right to life, equality, human dignity, freedom, security, health, education, privacy, and an adequate standard of living (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; The SHRC, 2009:7). Chapter Two of the South African Constitution makes provision for the Bill of Rights, which "...enshrines the rights of all the people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom." Furthermore, the fundamental principle of human rights is that all people regardless of sex, age, race, gender, religion, class, sexuality, nationality, or other distinctions are entitled to enjoy human rights (Ife, 2012:19). More importantly, human rights are birth rights and can neither be earned nor nullified (Bielefeldt, 2010:82).

It should also be noted that there is no hierarchy among human rights and all categories (that is civil, political, economic, social, and cultural and solidarity rights) should enjoy equal attention as they are dependent on each other (UNICEF, 2015:8). Unfortunately, there has always been a constant struggle to ensure that all human rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural) are equally guaranteed to the women (Reichert, 2012:451). The focus of the next section will be on the relationship between human rights and domestic violence and will explore women's human rights struggle because, as Morsink (2010:27) maintains, where violence prevails, human rights are under constant threat.

2.7.2 Domestic violence: An act of human rights violation

While the previous section focused on the background of human rights deriving from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, this section argues that domestic violence impedes the vision of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. From Columbia Law School's (2010:19) point of view, domestic violence qualifies as a violation of human rights due to the cruelty associated with the factors leading to the act, as well as its devastating consequences. Domestic violence is a human rights issue, which harms the victims as well as society (Mpani & Nsimande, 2015:8).

There is no doubt that domestic violence violates the Bill of Rights set out for all South Africans in the Constitution (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:9). As such, the concept of

human rights deserves attention, especially in the context of widespread violence against women across the world (Mapp, 2012:262). For Ife (2012:142), the significance of human rights within domestic violence is of necessity as the injustices of violence against women counter the values of human rights.

As early as 1995, Peters and Wolper (1995:2) called for human rights practice to be more gender-based, as women were believed to be more susceptible to suffer gender-based abuses including inequality of opportunity in education, employment, housing, credit, and health care, rape and domestic violence, reproductive freedom, and domestic labour. The United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2014:73) stipulates that the human rights discourse began to give domestic violence relatively more attention at the beginning of the 1990s. However, it was only in 2002, when governments keen to promote human rights, began to recognise domestic violence as an issue that required special attention (Weldon, 2012:10). There is now consensus that domestic violence is a threat to the realisation of equality, development, and peaceful societies, as it hinders women from enjoying their basic human rights and freedoms envisioned in international declarations and local legislation (CSV, 2016:3).

Schuler et al. (2008:327) find the term domestic violence itself to be problematic as it is more specifically used in the context of violence against women. This reflects the continuous existence of gender inequality and injustice against women in comparison to men (Schuler et al., 2008:327). Reichert (2012:451) laments that unless women's rights are fundamentally established as human rights, the role of women will always be secondary in all societal structures. This view is supported by Ife (2012:21) who argues that women's rights cannot be isolated from human rights because, at the core of the human rights concept, is the right to realise one's full humanity.

Huhle (2010:6) remains concerned about reports that individuals continue to suffer from violence and oppression amid human rights movements. As a result, Huhle (2010:6) believes that the concept of human rights is yet to be widely embraced in practice. The next section is focused on the application and implementation of the human rights concept in practice in addressing the injustices of domestic violence.

2.8 PURSUING A HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA – SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

While the previous section built a case that domestic violence violates women's human rights, this section will focus on how South Africa is advancing in pursuing a human rights agenda particularly in the context of domestic violence. This will be done by looking at the country's commitments on the international, regional, and local level. This is important because South Africa is a signatory to both international and regional treaties and protocols that seek to promote and protect women's human rights (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:13). As such, South Africa is required to have mechanisms in place that will ensure that women's rights are protected and promoted, as the countries that have endorsed international treaties on fighting violence against women must put necessary measures in place (Columbia Law School, 2010:6,19).

2.8.1 International level

The inception of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights saw with it the transformation of human rights from being a national issue to becoming an international issue (Kjaerum, 2010:20). Wronka (2011:443) views this to be a good move and further asserts that the more human rights are debated on a global scale, the better, as this will lead to a much-needed human rights culture that will foster implementation of the conventions and treaties.

As part of the global society, South Africa has committed itself to the promotion of human rights by endorsing both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979 (Department of Women, 2008:19; Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:32). The CEDAW calls on members of the states to condemn violence against women and to work towards the eradication of violence (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:74). In terms of this Convention, all spheres of government are expected to put measures in place to ensure the advancement of women in as far as human rights are concerned (CEDAW of 1979). Notably, the CEDAW has proved to be a catalyst for a range of international and governmental interventions thus meeting demands made by a broad coalition of women's movements over a period of years (McKie, 2005:80).

2.8.2 Regional level

Domestic violence features most frequently on the agendas of many developing countries (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:2). This is equally true for numerous Southern

African Development Community (SADC) countries which have embraced international conventions on human rights by upholding regional protocols (CSVR, 2016:2). This positive move towards eradicating domestic violence on regional level includes the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (The Maputo protocol) of 2003, as well as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 1979 (CSVR, 2016:2).

Under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), states are obliged to draw up and adopt measures necessary to promote women's rights, protection of dignity as well as protection from all forms of violence. Guided by the legally binding international and continental instruments, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (1979) seeks to remove gender inequalities and all forms of oppression faced by the women through the implementation of legislation, policies, programmes, and projects centred on women empowerment.

South Africa's commitment to the human rights discourse was affirmed by a report that acknowledged the country's participation in the advancement of women and gender equality, through its active role in the processes of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Union (AU) and SADC (Department of Women, 2008:40). The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's 2012 Social Institutions and Gender Index ranked South Africa as the fourth highest out of the 87 countries in Africa in making a significant impact in terms of addressing issues of gender inequality and women's rights (CSVR, 2016:2). These positive remarks are the results of the work that is taking place at the local level, an aspect that will be discussed in the next section.

2.8.3 Local level

Domestically, South Africa must establish measures necessary to ensure compliance with international and regional human rights treaties (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:13). South Africa's first democratic elections were perceived as one of the milestones towards realising a human rights agenda, especially since it happened shortly after the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993 (Kjaerum, 2010:21). During the 2018 annual Human Rights Day celebration held on the 21st of March, South Africa celebrated the day under the theme "The year of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela: Promoting and deepening a human rights culture across society"

(Department of Government Communication and Information System, 2018:1). In his speech, during the 70th Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebration held at Constitution Hill, Johannesburg, in 2018, the president of South Africa reaffirmed the country's commitment to the promotion of human rights by indicating that the government would continue to work closely with the office of the UN High Commissioner Human Rights, to advance human rights culture (The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa, 2018). This is an indication of the country's continuous commitment to the promotion of human rights and eradication of violations.

2.8.3.1 Human rights legislation

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) Act 40 of 2013 serves as the legislation for human rights promotion in the country. The SAHRC Act 40 of 2013 seeks to promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights by ensuring that there is development and attainment of human rights in the Republic. Programmes and services provided by different state institutions, such as the Departments of Social Development, Health, Justice and Constitutional Development, Education, Correctional Services and SAPS have been introduced to meet the objectives of the SAHRC Act 40 of 2013, in response to human rights violations perpetrated by domestic violence (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:37). While these programmes and services are extensive, the discussion will be limited to the role of social welfare in upholding human rights.

2.8.3.2 Role of social welfare services in upholding human rights

The adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997 introduced a new dawn of social services in South Africa that is embedded in human rights (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997). The White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997 articulates that "...social welfare services and programmes will be based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:11).

The Government used the White Paper as a strategy to facilitate developmental social welfare services that redress the injustices of the past (Green 2008:176). Under this new direction, the services rendered to populations at risk must adopt a rights-based approach by incorporating human rights values and principles into service delivery methods and strategies (Patel, 2015:198-199).

The Bill of Rights also brought a new paradigm to social welfare as it makes provision for fundamental human rights as well as social and economic rights (Green, 2008:176). Lombard (2005:212) comments that social services can never be successful in facilitating human, social or economic development if there is no commitment to social justice and human rights. Midgley (2012:100) stipulates that any social service effort should be directed towards fostering equality, social justice and promoting social rights.

The Department of Social Development (2013:8) articulates that in the past years, since the acceptance of the White Paper on Social Welfare, practitioners in the social welfare sector have reflected on the progress made in terms of the transition from a traditional to a developmental approach. Further guidance is needed on the implementation of the policies and programmes to achieve integrated developmental social welfare services (Department of Social Development, 2013:8). This view is similar to Lombard's (2007:295) remarks that although the White Paper for Social Welfare provided a clear guideline in terms of the policy framework, there have been challenges with its implementation. South Africa's challenges in terms of implementing the policy framework which incorporates human rights, is however not surprising, as this fact was already acknowledged at the International Conference on Social Welfare in 1968, where it was stipulated that there is generally a major challenge in implementing, protecting and making human rights real in the everyday lives of populations at risk (Staub-Bernasconi, 2011:30).

The role of social service professionals, as discussed in the next section, thus becomes important as they are the drivers of social welfare services. Although South Africa may have effective paper-based policies in place, the implementation thereof remains a challenge; a challenge which often falls on the shoulders of social service professionals (CSVR, 2016:4).

2.9 THE SCOPE OF SOCIAL SERVICES WITHIN HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICE

Violence places a heavy strain on the health of victims, the criminal justice system, as well as social welfare services (WHO, 2014:2). As such, it is important to understand the scope of social services in responding to this crisis from a human rights perspective, as required by the White Paper for Social Welfare. Human rights principles will be discussed as a point of departure, as professionals seeking to

promote human rights cannot achieve the mandate without adhering to the set principles and standards.

2.9.1 Human rights practice guiding principles

The human rights principles (that is, participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, legality) are an important guide in fostering institutions and professionals to create an environment where people will have a genuine role to play in defining their own needs while having access to rights, which enable them to make decisions to meet those needs (Ife, 2012:241).

2.9.1.1 Participation

The principle of participation entails bringing human rights consciousness to the point where ordinary people become part of human rights decision making (SHRC, 2009:11; UNICEF, 2015:15). This principle plays a significant role as the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2014:47) argues that unless women's participation is extensively promoted, society cannot claim to be grounded on human rights and democratic values. Collaboration between social service professionals and service users can ensure that people's voices are heard (Ife, 2012:197).

2.9.1.2 Accountability

The principle of accountability entails observation of legal norms and standards by the state and its institutions to ensure that human rights are upheld as required (UNICEF, 2015:15). Androff (2016:43) mentions that the principle of accountability entails establishing control measures to ensure that those found guilty of violations of human rights are held accountable for their actions. Such measures should involve interventions that minimise future violations, while at the same time strengthening human rights practice (Androff, 2016:43).

2.9.1.3 Non-discrimination and equality

Since all human beings are equal and entitled to enjoy human rights (UNICEF, 2015:15), the principle of non-discrimination and equality seeks to bring equality to those who cannot speak for themselves by eliminating any form of discrimination as an obstacle to realising human rights (SHRC, 2009: 12). Disturbingly, women continue to experience some level of discrimination as they are continuously excluded from political and economic spheres, and by so doing, kept from becoming active

participants in human rights discussions (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:43).

2.9.1.4 Empowerment

The principle of empowerment is similar to that of participation, in that it entails awakening of people's rights through inclusion in human rights policymaking and development (SHRC, 2009:13). To embrace the principle of empowerment, social welfare programmes should be people-driven and based on respect for human rights, while ensuring ownership for future development (Department of Social Development, 2013:14).

2.9.1.5 Legality

Legality refers to the recognition of human rights as legally binding and enforceable as contained in national and international human rights law (SHRC, 2009: 13). According to this principle, the existence and the realisation of human rights are highly dependent on the legal protection of the rights as promoted by the state (Ife, 2012:15). Measures should, therefore, be in place to ensure that women enjoy their right to equality before the law when their rights are infringed (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:109).

These principles serve as a lens for measuring the impact of social services in promoting human rights. The focus will now turn to the role played by social service professionals because for social work to reach its ultimate goal of creating a better society, human rights principles should be integrated into both social work practice and policy (Reichert, 2011:217).

2.10 ROLE OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Governments in countries that are committed to the promotion of human rights are required by human rights law to ensure that state officials work towards fulfilling human rights standards and rules (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:26). The provision of developmental social welfare services is the collective responsibility of various role players including the state, non-profit and private sectors (Green, 2008:179). It is important to understand the roles as Carlson and Listhaug (2007:472-473) argue that individual experiences and perceptions of human rights are largely influenced by the knowledge of social service professionals in different settings.

Generally, social service professionals provide a variety of services such as psychosocial support, advocacy, and empowerment programmes to women and children affected by domestic violence, including the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (Patel, 2015:238). The social work profession, in particular, has a mandate to provide an advocacy role to ensure that practices and policies are based on respect for human rights (DeLuca-Acconi, 2016:2). This role is mandated by the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development which commits social service professionals to promote a just and fair world where the dignity and worth of all the people are respected, by ensuring that human rights become a reality (International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) & International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW), 2012:1). Midgley and Conley (2010:17) argue that although human rights have not been widely emphasised in social work, many scholars have released publications alluding to the relevance of human rights within the social work profession.

Ife (2012:197) holds the view that social workers are in an advantageous position to advocate for human rights as they work closely with disadvantaged and marginalised groups. Gil (2013:1) states that social service professionals, including social workers and social policy professionals, are always engaging with the victims of injustices and oppression, requiring them to deploy strategies that promote the holistic wellbeing of the victims. Under the political empowerment system, social work is mandated to empower service users to challenge the structures and institutions perpetuating exclusion, discrimination, and oppression (Elliott, 2011:103). Wronka (2011:440) maintains that the social work profession has a significant role to play in the field of human rights as the two are working towards a common goal, which includes empowerment, liberation, and fulfilment of human needs.

The next point will focus on some of the challenges hindering a human rights approach in practice.

2.11 HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH – CHALLENGES IN PRACTICE

Despite all the efforts made through declarations, treaties, and developmental social welfare services, Mapp (2012:249) still raises a concern that those who are oppressed in society always have difficulties accessing the rights guaranteed to them by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The majority of those affected are women, as they continue to hold a subordinate status in most societies (Mapp, 2012:249). The

challenges of applying a human rights approach in practice are two-fold, emerging as a result of failure by the justice system and as precipitated by the drivers of social welfare services, the social service professionals.

The South African justice system is partly to blame for continued challenges in failing to criminalise domestic violence (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:9). A failure of this nature deprives women of enjoying human rights, which is distressing because it is the duty of any democratic state to protect its citizens from continuous criminal victimisation (Payne & Wermeling, 2009:1). The failure is seen as a contradiction to South Africa's commitment to work towards the full development and advancement of human rights for women, as obliged by international treaties (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:9).

Generally, from a human rights perspective, the drivers of social welfare service are perceived as potential violators of human rights (Ife, 2012:233). This is so because often, in their efforts to assist service users, social service professionals impose their views on the service users without realising that their actions may violate people's rights to make their own decisions (Ife, 2013:33). Stensrud (2005:16) states that women reported negative experiences with social workers in domestic violence shelters, such as the wrong choice of words used in asking questions about abuse; being judged for wanting to leave an abusive relationship; and a lack of empathy and sympathy. The Columbia Law School (2010:19) strongly argues that states need to adhere to the international law on human rights by ensuring that government agents, as well as non-governmental agents, refrain from human rights abuses.

A major challenge identified by Gil (2013:1) is that social workers and other social service professionals often lack theoretical insights in what causes dehumanising conditions, and which strategies can be used to transform an unjust and oppressive society. Ife (2012:11) argues that the main problem stems from the fact that there is little articulation of what it means in practice for the professionals to claim that their work is based on human rights. As such, the human rights concept remains a noble idea which is largely challenged when it comes to practice (Ife, 2012:11).

2.12 SUMMARY

Domestic violence is a worldwide phenomenon that deprives women of fully enjoying their human rights. Both the global and local trends show that it remains a prevailing act of violence against women, with Africa being amongst the leading continents where

such violence is prevalent. In South Africa, the DVA was introduced to address the issues surrounding violence taking place in homes. However, the DVA is criticised for failing to meet the needs of women in need of protection.

The prevalence of domestic violence can be attributed to numerous factors mostly centred on patriarchal practices that subject women to inferior positions in domestic contexts, as well as in society. These factors not only perpetuate domestic violence but also cost the state enormous amounts of money annually to address the consequences of violence.

Homelessness is one of the consequences resulting from domestic violence leading to the emergence of shelters for women exposed to domestic violence. These shelters play a positive role in assisting women in breaking away from violent environments. In South Africa, the scope of shelters falls within the Victim Empowerment Programme. Under the VEP, shelters are faced with numerous challenges such as lack of funding and staff turnover, which thus compromise the quality of the services rendered. Consequently, women encounter numerous challenges in accessing and receiving social services in shelters. This makes it more difficult for women to enjoy human rights even when an attempt is made to break away from abuse.

Domestic violence is declared a violation of women's human rights due to the impact and consequences violence has on women. Treaties, conventions, and protocols have been introduced in an attempt to accelerate and promote human rights, especially for women who continue to suffer from domestic violence. South Africa is one of the countries that strives to promote human rights and has become a signatory to international and regional treaties and protocols in this regard. Its commitment is seen on the local level through the introduction of human rights legislation as well as social welfare services that seek to promote human rights practice.

The White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997 was specifically introduced to deal with the issue of human rights, among other issues. As such, social services should be dictated by the principles of human rights that serve as a guideline for human rights practice. Social workers, as well as other social service professionals, have a significant role to play in ensuring that the human rights of those marginalised in society are realised, as they are in the best position to interact with victims of abuse and other forms of deprivation that hinder the promotion of human rights. However, in

practice, there remains a challenge in terms of implementing a human rights based-approach.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to give a detailed report on the findings of the study. This will be achieved by presenting the research question, goal, objectives, methodology as well as ethical aspects. The discussions of the empirical findings of the study will follow the explanations of the research methodology.

The study aimed to answer the following research question:

How do social services rendered in and by shelters promote the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence?

To achieve the goal of the study, which was to explore and discuss the role of social services in shelters in promoting the rights of women who were exposed to domestic violence, the following objectives were formulated:

- To contextualise the inclusion of human rights in the rendering of social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence, with specific reference to women living in shelters.
- To explore the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence regarding the promotion of human rights via social services rendered in shelters.
- To explore the perceptions of social service professionals on the promotion of human rights through social services.
- To explore how human rights are promoted in shelters for women exposed to domestic violence through social services.
- To make recommendations to social professionals rendering social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence from a human rights perspective.

The study was conducted in the Tshwane Municipal area, which is in the northern region of the Gauteng province.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section focuses on the research approach, type of research, research design and research methods.

3.2.1 Research approach

The study was qualitative as it sought to understand the role of social services in promoting the rights of women, by exploring and describing their views on services received at shelters (Fouché & Delport, 2011:66). The study included perceptions of both social service professionals and women exposed to domestic violence, regarding the promotion of the rights of women based on the services rendered in shelters. The research was descriptive and exploratory as it sought to answer how social service professionals promote the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence via social services (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:96). The study originated from an identified gap in information regarding the relationship between domestic violence and human rights in South Africa (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:95). This qualitative approach enabled the researcher to obtain detailed views, opinions, descriptions, experiences, and understanding of a human rights approach in the context of domestic violence shelters from the participants in the study.

3.2.2 Type of research

The type of research was applied research as the study sought to explore viable solutions to problems in the field by exploring the promotion of human rights through social services in the context of shelters for women exposed to domestic violence (Fouché & De Vos, 2011:94).

3.2.3 Research design

The study followed a case study research design, and in particular a collective case study design to collect data. The collective case study design enabled the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence, as well as perceptions of social service professionals in three different shelters (Creswell, 2009:13). This particular research design was appropriate and effective as it enabled the researcher to explore and understand the promotion of human rights from social service professionals, and women exposed to domestic violence (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:308).

3.2.4 Research methods

The discussion under this section focuses on the study population and sampling, data collection, data analysis, and the pilot study.

3.2.4.1 Study population and sampling

The population of the study comprised women who were previously exposed to domestic violence, as well as the social service professionals of shelters situated in Tshwane.

Non-probability sampling was used to select a sample, as it is useful in instances where there are uncertainties concerning the availability and size of the required sample (Babbie, 2013:128). This was done because, although the researcher knew the population, which is women previously exposed to domestic violence and social service professionals in shelters, there were uncertainties with regard to the size of the population, as it frequently changes. Purposive sampling was employed based on the researcher's judgment regarding participants who are most representative of the entire population (Babbie, 2013:128). This judgment was influenced by Silverman's (2013:148) input that purposive sampling demands of the researcher to think critically about the nature of the study concerning the sample to be chosen, which should be the most representative of the population at large.

In preparing to choose a sample, recruitment was done through the assistance of shelter managers who know the women residing in the shelters. The managers provided potential participants with information about the research, and the researcher contacted the women who volunteered to participate in the study. With regard to social service professionals, once the researcher presented the study to the manager, staff members were briefed by the manager and researcher and the names of social service professionals who showed interest in taking part in the study were included in the sample.

The researcher conducted the study at three shelters to ensure that distinct aspects and dynamics of social service delivery in relation to the promotion of human rights were covered. The sample, therefore, consisted of five women from the shelters adhering to the following criteria:

- Women previously exposed to domestic violence.
- Women who have lived in a shelter for at least two months.

- Women between the ages of 18 and 35 years.
- Women able to communicate in either English or Tswana.

The researcher selected seven staff members from three shelters who are involved in service delivery to the women. The participants adhered to the following criteria:

- Staff member with a qualification in social work, while the other staff members such as house mothers, must have any other relevant qualification in the social sciences.
- Staff member involved in either planning or implementation of services to women within the context of the shelter.
- Staff member with at least three years work experience in social service delivery.

Three shelters for women in Tshwane were approached to find a number of units of analysis meeting the sampling criteria. The shelters adhered to the following criteria:

- The shelter must accommodate women for at least three months.
- The shelter must employ qualified social service professionals.
- The shelter must be in operation for at least three years.

The researcher used participants who were willing to be part of the study, matching the above-outlined criteria. Out of the twelve participants, three were social workers; four were house mothers, one was a woman who had left the shelter, while four were women who were still receiving social services from the shelters in the study. All participants gave consent by signing informed consent letters hereto attached as Appendix A.

3.2.4.2 Data collection

The researcher obtained permission from three shelters to conduct the study. Upon approval from the shelters, the researcher approached potential participants who fit the criteria and were willing to participate in the study.

In terms of the data collection technique, the researcher used semi-structured one-to-one interviews to gain a detailed picture of the participants (women and social service professionals) experiences, beliefs about, and perceptions of the promotion of human rights through social services (Fox, 2009:8). Interviews were carried out on different dates depending on the availability of the individual participants.

Semi-structured interviews were used because interviews, in general, have advantages such as being useful in obtaining substantial amounts of data quickly (Greeff, 2011:360) and they are effective in obtaining in-depth data (Dörnyei, 2007:140). In this regard, the researcher had a similar experience as has been indicated in the literature just referred to above. Through the interviews conducted, participants gave detailed information related to the field in which the researcher was interested.

There are certain disadvantages to interviews, such as participants not willing to share private issues (Creswell, 2013:340), as well as the researcher asking questions that do not elicit the desired response from participants (Greeff, 2011:360). As a result, the responses may be misinterpreted or at times untruthful (Greeff, 2011:360). To address these disadvantages, the researcher made it clear to the participants from the onset that the purpose of the study was not to judge, but rather to explore the social services rendered by the shelters, to understand their relevance within the context of human rights. The researcher did not experience any negativity during the interviews. Participants were open about their experiences. Interviews are criticised for not being representative of the entire population because they are context specific, thus fitting only the demands of the interactive context of the interview (Miller & Glassner, 2011:132). This criticism does not diminish the value of the interviews conducted as the findings correlate with existing literature and thus can be applicable in different contexts.

In conducting the interviews, two interview schedules; one for the women (Appendix B) and one for social service professionals (Appendix C), were used which contained themes guiding the semi-structured interviews. This was done in line with what is proposed by Greeff (2011:360) who stipulates that having determined the overall issue to be tackled in the interview, the researcher must consider a broad range of themes or question areas to be covered in the interview. Themes in qualitative research are broad units of information that consist of several codes grouped to form a common idea (Creswell, 2013:186). The researcher prepared a number of themes with sub-questions that guided the interviews to explore the experiences of the women exposed to domestic violence, and the perceptions of the social service professionals on the promotion of human rights using social service delivery in shelters. Themes for the interview schedules were derived from an in-depth literature study on the topic of the

research study. These themes were not used to dictate interviews but were only used as a guideline. Participants were thus not limited in sharing information. The researcher used probing skills to dig deeper where participants did not go into sufficient detail. Greeff (2011:345) asserts that this skill plays a vital role in extorting richness of data by persuading participants to provide more information on the questions.

3.2.4.3 Data analysis

Since data analysis is understood differently by different researchers resulting in the development of different methods of analysis (Punch, 2005:193), this study used integrated analytic spiral qualitative data analysis process, as suggested by Schurink, Fouché, and De Vos (2011:403-418) which was executed as follows:

3.2.4.3.1 Planning for the recording of data

Schurink et al. (2011:404) cite the importance of deciding on the recording of data before data collection and stipulate that such a decision should consider participants' setting as well as obtaining participants' approval. Due to the sensitivity of the study on the part of the women, the researcher made arrangements for the use of a private room in the shelters to conduct the interviews and was granted permission by the participants to use a digital voice recorder to record the interviews (Schurink et al., 2011:404).

3.2.4.3.2 Data collecting and preliminary analyses: The two-fold approach

In a qualitative study, data analysis does not take place as a once-off step but evolves throughout in conjunction with data collection (Denscombe, 2010:272; Schurink et al., 2011:405). Such a combination provides the researcher with the opportunity to formulate follow-up questions, identify emerging themes and explore them (Grbich as cited in Schurink et al., 2011:405). The researcher analysed data through-out by listening to the recorded interviews before conducting the next interview. This assisted the researcher in ensuring that the collected information contributed to answering the research question. The exercise afforded the researcher the opportunity to probe emerging themes that were not in the original interview schedule but proved to be valuable. This led to the adjustment of the original interview schedule by merging similar sub-themes, rephrasing questions, or removing certain sub-themes, thereby testing and refining the original interview schedule (Greeff, 2011:352).

3.2.4.3.3 Managing data

Managing data is an intensive process where all collected data is fully recorded and followed up with transcriptions of the interviews if they were voice recorded (Schurink et al., 2011:408). In managing data, the researcher used a computer to transcribe all the digitally voice recorded interviews, informed by Creswell's (2013:182) input on the analysis of data obtained via electronic voice recorded data.

3.2.4.3.4 Reading and writing memos

Schurink et al. (2011:410) advise that the researcher should repeatedly read transcripts to grasp their meaning to group information into different sections. It is helpful at this stage to write memos, which can be short phrases, ideas, or key concepts relevant to exploring data gathered (Creswell, 2013:183). The researcher went through the transcripts over an extended period to understand what was communicated and grouped similar information by writing down key concepts and short phrases.

3.2.4.3.5 Generating categories and coding data

During this stage, the researcher reduces data by identifying common themes, grouping them, and categorising them under different codes (Schurink et al., 2011:410). The researcher identified common themes in the data and highlighted themes in assorted colours as a way of coding. Generating categories is achieved by giving detailed descriptions of the themes and interpreting them through the view of the researcher as well as different views from the literature (Creswell, 2013:184). This was done by incorporating views of participants with existing literature, under different sub-themes.

3.2.4.3.6 Testing emergent understanding and searching for alternative explanations

Schurink et al. (2011:415) mention that this process challenges the researcher to critically view the data in terms of the phenomenon holistically. That is, looking over and above what is reported by participants, as their reports at times might be vague (Schurink et al., 2011:416). During this stage, the researcher takes findings to the broader context by not limiting them to participants' views but by linking his/her interpretation to the existing literature on the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013:187). The researcher used this time to compare the literature with the information shared by the

participants in an attempt to fully understand and comprehend the promotion of human rights in the context of women exposed to domestic violence.

3.2.4.3.7 Presenting the data

Authors such as Creswell (2013:187) and Schurink et al. (2011:418) stipulate that the final presentation of data can be done in the form of a text, and tables or figures. The researcher made use of text to provide the final presentations under different headings. Data is thus presented in the form of themes that emerged from the collected information, supported by verbatim (unedited) quotes from the interviews and literature related to the topic under investigation.

3.2.4.3.8 Trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility of qualitative data

Creswell (2013:201) articulates that trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility are established when the findings are presented in a way that closely reflects the ideas and meanings of the participants as opposed to those of the researcher. To ensure credibility, the researcher deployed strategies such as reflexivity, audit trail, member checking, and peer debriefing (Jeanty & Hibel, 2011:649).

Reflexivity refers to a process where the researcher becomes aware of how her belief system will influence the study (Horsburgh, 2003:308). Lietz, Langer, and Furman (2006:448) mention that reflexivity is important because failure to recognise how a researcher's beliefs can interfere in the study may result in the loss of valuable information communicated by participants. Upon undertaking the study, the researcher had her ideas and views about domestic violence and human rights. However, such views did not dictate the interviews nor the interpretation of data. This is because the researcher was guided by the theory of the Person-Centred Approach (PCA), which encourages professionals to understand people from their frame of reference and also to understand that people's perceptions differ as experiential worlds differ (Grobler & Schenck, 2013:18). The researcher did not have any preconceived ideas on the outcomes of the study because the practice of human rights as indicated by Ife (2012:11), is difficult to predict as there is little articulation of what it means in practice to claim that one's work is based on human rights. As such, the researcher approached the study with a learning mentality, as she was eager to learn more about human rights practice especially in the context of domestic violence.

Jeanty and Hibel (2011:649) describe an audit trail as a journal or diary used to record research events in order to keep the researcher on the alert regarding her impressions, perceptions, and experiences that might compromise trustworthiness. An audit trail allows the study to be flexible as the researcher can follow procedures regularly, make new decisions and record them for justification (Lietz et al., 2006:450). The researcher used an audit trail to keep a record of procedures, dates, places, time, and changes that occurred as semi-structured interviews cannot be fixed. New decisions were made as needs dictated.

Lietz et al. (2006:453) indicate that member checking is necessary in ensuring trustworthiness as participants get a chance to review findings thereby allowing them to confirm or dispute the report if it does not fit their description of events. The researcher used this method to check with participants if their responses have been interpreted correctly to draft a credible report. This was done by handing out transcripts to the participants and giving them one week to review the transcripts. This process gave the researcher an opportunity to clarify unclear statements, and biased ideas as both the researcher and the participants had meaningful engagements while going through the findings.

Lastly, peer debriefing affirms the credibility of the study as other researchers get the opportunity to audit and scrutinise the findings (Lietz et al., 2006:451). The process of peer debriefing involved reflective discussions with a social work colleague, and this was done through critical dialogue looking at domestic violence as a phenomenon and human rights practice on a global and local scale.

3.2.4.4 Pilot study

The researcher did a pilot study with one woman and one social service professional to test if the interview schedule would yield results in answering the research question. This was done to test the feasibility of the study, modify research instruments, frame questions, collect background information, and adapt research procedures (Fouché & Delpont, 2011:73). Relevant themes that emerged during the pilot study were further explored during the main study interviews.

In qualitative studies, researchers often include pilot data in the main study since there is no concern over data corruption and often only minor changes are made in the main study (Ishmail, Kinchin & Edwards, 2018:6). The pilot study was generally useful in

improving the interview schedule, and due to the richness of data collected, the pilot study has been included in the main study results as the same questions covered in the main study were covered during the pilot study.

3.3 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Strydom (2011:114) defines ethics as a set of moral principles, which inform and dictate the researcher's conduct towards participants regarding rules and expectations. For this study the following ethical issues were considered:

3.3.1 Avoidance of harm

Any study poses a risk of physical and emotional harm to subjects, which must be brought to their knowledge for them to withdraw from the study if necessary (Strydom, 2011:115). Kumar (2011:245) stipulates that any form of harm should be minimised as much as possible, and necessary steps should be taken to ensure the minimisation of potential harm. The study posed a risk of emotional harm as it deals with women previously exposed to domestic violence, though the focus was rather on the services rendered to the women, than on domestic violence.

The researcher informed participants of the possible harm in order for them to make an informed decision to become part of the study or to decline participation. It was indicated that should harm be identified during the study, participants would be referred to therapeutic services offered by qualified social workers from the Department of Social Development, Statutory Unit. No harm was foreseen on the part of the social service professionals as they shared their day-to-day work experiences. As far as the researcher could determine, no physical or emotional harm was triggered by the study.

3.3.2 Voluntary participation

Rubin and Babbie (2005:71) state that no person should ever be coerced into becoming a participant of any study. The researcher made it clear that participation was voluntary and none of the participants was coerced into taking part in the study.

3.3.3 Informed consent

It is unethical to carry out a study with participants without their knowledge and willingness to participate (Kumar, 2011:244). Informed consent means that participants must fully understand the purpose and nature of the study, and know they have the right to withdraw at any time (Ryen, 2004:231). The researcher compiled an

informed consent form (Appendix A) which stated the goal of the study, advantages, and disadvantages of participation, the use of a digital voice recorder, the use of interview schedules and permission to withdraw. All participants signed the informed consent form before the interviews commenced.

3.3.4 Deception of subjects and/or respondents

It is important for the researcher to make her identity and intentions known to the participants as the deception of people through the withholding of truthful information is unethical (Babbie, 2013:38). The researcher provided accurate information on the study in the letter of informed consent and did not in any way knowingly withhold any information from the participants.

3.3.5 Violation of privacy/confidentiality

Strydom (2011:119) mentions that privacy and confidentiality go hand in hand as they ensure that no one accesses participants' confidential information against their will. It is unethical to share confidential information about respondents with another person for purposes other than research (Kumar, 2011:246). Information from participants was treated confidentially to ensure privacy. Participants were interviewed in a private room, and this ensured that no one listened to the interviews, although there were interruptions by an office phone ringing and people knocking at the door. Privacy was ensured by using pseudonyms. No participant will be identifiable in the research report and data will be securely stored.

3.3.6 Debriefing of participants

Debriefing entails a process where interviewers discover any problems generated by the research experience so that those problems can be corrected (Babbie, 2013:39). Before the interviews, the researcher had discussions with participants to clarify any misconceptions about participation in the study. At the end of the interviews, the researcher and the participants had post discussions about participants' experience of their participation. Participants indicated that the interviews were like a much-needed reflective session and there was resultant thoughtful consideration by some house mothers to further their studies in social sciences to align with the current scope of social service delivery.

3.3.7 Actions and competence of the researcher

Walliman (2006:148) states that "...researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent, honest and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation." The researcher can be considered as competent as she has been exposed to research methodology and, as a social worker, is adequately skilled to undertake the interviews for the study. Moreover, the researcher shall under no circumstances commit plagiarism but has referenced all the ideas and work of other authors. Her research supervisor furthermore guided the researcher.

3.3.8 Publication of the findings

The researcher is obliged by the ethical requirements of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pretoria to follow the procedures and show integrity and honesty by reporting true findings (Strydom, 2011:126). It is expected of every researcher to give correct and unbiased findings (Kumar, 2011:247). The researcher understands that it is unethical to manipulate data, and therefore only reported on the information collected during the study. A research report on the findings will be submitted to the Department of Social Work and Criminology of the University of Pretoria upon completion of the study. The data collected will be stored at the Department of Social Work and Criminology for 15 years.

3.4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This section presents the empirical findings of the study. The findings of the study are presented under the following structures:

Section 1: Biographical information of study participants

Section 2: Themes and sub-themes

3.4.1 Section 1: Biographical information of study participants

3.4.1.1 Biographical information of social service professionals

The information on social service professionals covers gender, age, race, qualification, position, and years of experience in the field of social services. All participants are practicing in shelters rendering social services to women exposed to domestic violence. The number of participants is not in chronological order because the researcher conducted interviews with both the social professionals and women exposed to domestic violence during the same period and as per the availability of participants. Therefore, participants 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 12 comprised of social service

professionals while participants 1, 8, 9, 10, 11 comprised of women exposed to domestic violence.

Table 1: Biographical profile of social service professionals

Participant	Gender	Age groups in years	Race	Social service qualification	Position in the shelter	Years of experience in social service delivery
2	Female	29 – 35	African	Social Auxiliary Work	House mother	6 years
3	Female	29 – 35	African	Social Auxiliary Work	House mother	3 years
4	Female	36 – 42	African	Bachelor of Social Work	Social worker	11 years
5	Female	43 – 49	African	Bachelor of Social Work	Social worker	6 years
6	Female	50 – 55	African	Child and Youth Care Work	House mother	18 years
7	Female	50 – 55	African	Bachelor of Social Work	Social worker	16 years
12	Female	22 – 28	African	Child and Youth Care Work	House mother	6 years

3.4.1.2 Biographical information of women exposed to domestic violence

Information on women exposed to domestic violence covers age, race, period of stay in a shelter, and economic status.

Table 2: Biographical information of women exposed to domestic violence

Participant	Age groups in years	Race	Period of stay	Economic status
1	46 – 52	White	13 months	Employed
8	46 – 52	African	3 months	Unemployed
9	53+	Indian	10 months	Unemployed
10	46 – 52	African	4 months	Unemployed
11	25 – 31	African	3 months	Unemployed

The researcher had initially planned to include women of ages 18 years to 35 years. However, at the time when the interviews were conducted, there was only one woman who met the age criteria. The others who were interested were then included as age did not have any impact on the goal of the study.

3.4.1.3 Background on the shelters

Information on the shelters covers year of establishment, target area, period of accommodation and location of operation.

Table 3: Background information on the shelters

Shelter	Year of establishment	Target	Period that women may stay in the shelter	Location
Shelter 1	1992	Domestic violence	3 – 6 months	Tshwane
Shelter 2	1991	Domestic violence and human trafficking	3 – 6 months	Tshwane
Shelter 3	1993	Domestic violence and gender-based violence	3 – 6 months	Tshwane

3.4.2 Section 2: Themes and sub-themes

This section focuses on the findings of the study by presenting the views of women exposed to domestic violence as well as those of social service professionals rendering social services in shelters, in Tshwane. The views presented here were collected during one-to-one semi-structured interviews with the participants. The views are hereby presented in terms of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study. Since there was a correlation of information between themes emerging from the social service professionals and women exposed to domestic violence, findings will be integrated. Views of social service professionals are presented under SP1 to SP7 while views of women exposed to domestic violence are presented under WP1 to WP5, as per number of participants interviewed under the two groups.

Table 4: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Domestic violence	1.1 Understanding of the term domestic violence 1.2 Knowledge of and awareness campaigns on the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 1.3 The role of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 in curbing violence against women 1.4 Ways to improve the legislation 1.5 Factors contributing to domestic violence 1.6 Impact of domestic violence on victims 1.7 Relevance of feminism as a lens in understanding domestic violence 1.8 Needs that women have upon leaving abusive relationships
2. Services rendered by shelters	2.1 Nature of services 2.2 Intake criteria 2.3 Period of stay 2.4 Exit strategy

	2.5 Relevance of the Victim Empowerment Programme in shelters
	2.6 Challenges women face in shelters
	2.7 Ways to improve the services
3. Human rights practice	3.1 Understanding/comprehension of the term human rights
	3.2 Knowledge of South African human rights legislation and human rights entitlements
	3.3 Human rights activities in shelters
	3.4 Human rights violations
4. Social welfare services	4.1 Understanding of the term developmental social welfare approach
	4.2 Theories and/or approaches guiding social welfare services
5. Role of social services in promoting human rights	5.1 Promotion of human rights principles through social services
	5.2 Role of social services profession in promoting human rights

Themes and sub-themes will be discussed in accordance with quotations from the interviews as well as the integration of literature where applicable.

3.4.2.1 Theme 1: Domestic violence

This theme showed that the phenomenon of domestic violence is understood on diverse levels. Participants' knowledge and views are discussed under the following sub-themes.

Sub-theme 1.1 Understanding of the term domestic violence

The interviews showed that domestic violence as a term is understood fairly well by social service professions. This is how some participants expressed it:

SP4 *Domestic violence for me is a conflict of violence that happens between intimate partners or family or friends living together. Conflict in terms of maybe*

like misunderstanding which leads to fights eh other partner hitting another partner; whether the couple is married or not. Or maybe it's a sibling living together or parents as long as there is violence within people who know each other and who are living together. For me, that's domestic violence.

SP1 *For me... for me, it is fights that occur in families. Like when people... let's take it with man and woman who are not treating each other right; then they start fighting and hitting each other. Things like that where we end up having physical abuse, sexual and psychological abuse.*

Findings show that domestic violence is not only perceived as a fight between intimate partners but includes other family members such as children abusing their parents. Findings support the view that while society has long viewed the family as a unit that provides a safe environment, the conditions have changed and homes have turned into war zones (Barnett et al., 2011:2). Social service professionals understood violence to be orchestrated mostly by men towards women, affirming the view that although crime accounts for some of the violence in South Africa, there is a considerable number of violent incidents occurring in homes, usually by men, directed towards women (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:3). As a result, there is often an exodus of women from their homes into shelters to seek refuge (Kostouros, 2008:34).

Sub-theme 1.2 Knowledge of and awareness campaigns on the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998

When it comes to women's knowledge of the legislation, social service professionals indicated that there are three different categories of women. Some women are aware of the legislation but have not used it; women who are aware of the legislation and abuse it; and women who lack knowledge of the legislation.

It is believed that there are women who are aware of the legislation and choose not to use it for reasons such as financial support, family members and in-laws, and fear. These are some of the expressions:

SP6 *Even those that know are afraid to use it. They are afraid to report cases. Uhm in the first place let's say maybe the woman is not working eh she's scared to lay a charge against the partner because if she's not working if the partner is arrested where would, she get a plate of food?*

SP3 *And sometimes they are scared of the in-laws you know or their family members you know.*

Again, there are women who know about the legislation and tend to abuse it. This is how one participant expressed it:

SP4 *There are those who know; they tend to abuse it. Like those that we have come across. Yah and they tend to abuse it because they know the channels.*

There is a consensus among social service professionals that it is mostly women in rural areas who lack knowledge of the Domestic Violence Act. This can be seen in the following expression:

SP1 *Like for example, in rural areas right, I am from rural areas, right? Domestic violence occurs time and again but due to lack of information you find that I don't know that I have rights to say what is wrong and what is right.*

The majority of participants maintained that most women lack knowledge of the legislation and this can be seen in the following expression:

SP5 *They arrived here without having any knowledge of it. It is not most of them who know about that information. It is not most of them who were aware of that information upon arrival.*

Awareness campaigns thus become important and interviews showed that shelters are engaging in this task. This is what participants had to say:

SP4 *Through our awareness campaigns when we go to schools, when we go to clinics and with also our ladies here, during the group sessions especially the life skills we do educate them about the legislations.*

SP2 *Okay, we don't speak to our residents only. We also go out and do awareness and speak to offenders out there because anyone can be an abuser knowingly or unknowingly.*

Some participants felt that there is still a need for more awareness campaigns. This can be seen in the following expression:

SP5 *They need to do more campaigns; they need to make more awareness of domestic violence.*

Findings on a lack of knowledge of legislation relate to Davies and Dreyer's (2014:8) view that one of the challenges associated with the Domestic Violence Act is that the majority of victims do not know about the protection provided by the Act. For this reason, the UN rapporteur has since urged the South African government to embark on massive domestic violence awareness campaigns and education at all societal

levels, having experienced how the majority of victims lack legislative information (CSVR, 2016:4). Weighing in on the issue of awareness, the conference report by the CSVR (2008:4) highlighted that civil society in South Africa is continuously engaging in the promotion of the Domestic Violence Act through public awareness and education campaigns. This report is supported by the findings that showed that shelters are embarking on awareness campaigns to curb domestic violence by reaching out to the victims and perpetrators.

Sub-theme 1.3 The role of the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 in curbing violence against women

Social service professionals believe that legislation plays a minimal role in addressing domestic violence by giving women a platform to take a stand against abuse. The majority of the participants felt that there are more negatives than positives regarding the legislation's role in curbing violence against women. This is what one participant had to say on the positive side of the legislation:

SP6 *Well the positive side is that like protection; it's there to protect the victim. And yah to protect the victim for her rights, the human rights. Her rights as a person shouldn't be violated. And the other thing with the Act you know, people are supposed to get help where... such as maybe from the police, from whoever, that they go to, the social workers. It affords them a platform where they can go and report the matter to.*

Social service professionals stated that as much as the Act assists in the fight against violence directed towards women, it has flaws that make it difficult for services to be rendered in an efficient and effective manner. Participants believe that challenges related to the Domestic Violence Act stem from poor implementation by the service providers rather than the Act itself. The following expression was given in this regard:

SP2 *It's just that sometimes it's not well implemented. Yah there are certain steps that are not followed according to the Act. I mean the users of this Act it's the police, social workers, Department of Justice they are the law itself. The Department of Justice when coming to the court cases!*

There are contrasting views when it comes to the issue of protection orders. Some participants view it as a tool that affords protection, while others felt that it increases the risk of violence. These are some of the expressions:

SP4 *Even though you are living in the same house, same environment; you feel like because of this paper I feel like I'm protected; that if this person comes or violate this protection order, I know that I have the law on my side.*

SP3 *But then, that's where the gap is. You get assistance, or they will say make protection order. But the protection order is a paper! You go with that paper to the very same house. They tell that person that these are the conditions for... for... for a protection order, and he violates them. And you can be killed holding that paper.*

It was also reported that the Act has unintended consequences such as misconception and abuse of the Act. This is what participants had to say:

SP6 *Like for instance eh with the protection order, people don't understand or maybe if someone opens the case sometimes the other... the perpetrator would assume that this person maybe hates him or her, but it's not like that. For me is just the misinterpretation of the other person, especially the perpetrator.*

SP4 *The negative side of the Act is that somehow people tend to abuse it.*

The positive findings support the view that the Domestic Violence Act is a progressive law (Mogstad & Dryding, 2016:5). For this reason, the Act continues to be useful in responding to the occurrence and negative effects of domestic violence (CSV, 2008:11). While the Act seeks to ensure that the relevant organs of the state give full effect to the provisions of the Act (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998), findings show that there is dissatisfaction in the manner in which the organs of the state, such as the police, respond to the provisions of the Act.

The findings of mixed feelings relating to protection orders have been recorded in a conference report by the CSV (2008:8), where evidence was provided on cases where the protection order yielded positive results as well as cases where it made the situation worse for the victims. The views by the participants who are against protection orders are in line with an analysis by Furusa and Limberg (2015:2) who found the Domestic Violence Act lacking in terms of providing tangible safety measures, as it only offers victims protection on paper in the form of a protection order. Payne and Wermeling (2009:3) find the idea of a protection order to be frustrating because action by the police can only be taken once this particular order has been violated and thus it does not guarantee any form of safety to the victim. While the Act

seeks to eliminate violence by affording victims maximum protection (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998), findings show that this protection is currently only on a minimum level.

Sub-theme 1.4 Ways to improve the legislation

The majority of social service professionals felt that the legislation is sufficient but indicated that the challenge lies with its implementation. There are however a few participants who believe that there are a number of ways in which legislation could be improved. These are some of their views:

SP1 *I'm not aware of the changes that need to happen but... Yes, its implementation! I will say its implementation is not right, the way they are implementing it. But not to say Act is not protecting us; it is the way they implement it!*

SP7 *I think it should be... how can I put this, maybe if they make it as a crime that if you abuse a person that is considered as a crime maybe its rate will decrease.*

One participant associated the issue of complications with the implementation as precipitated by the broad scope of the Act, often leading to the attendance of cases outside the domestic setting. This is how she described it:

SP3 *Maybe we should... the forms are more than the term. The forms... They should maybe amend some of the forms and develop other that will cover... with this one of domestic, it has to be domestic. The household thing! If we look into that one, then we know how to work with those people and help them. Yes in instances when a person fought with a neighbour. Yes, you were violated but is it domestic? They call it domestic when you go to the police station; it's under domestic violence. They say "Call the shelter there is a person who was assaulted by a neighbour." So what am I going to do? How am I going to intervene there? Or your landlord...*

The findings support a statement by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (2014:82), that while many countries have progressed well in introducing and adopting legislation on violence against women, there remains a challenge in the implementation of this legislation. This reaffirms the view that while the DVA provides a clear mandate in terms of stipulating steps to be taken in protecting victims, there are certain flaws in its implementation (CSV, 2016:13). Another

challenge highlighted by the findings support an argument that the South African justice system is partly to blame for continued challenges and for failing to criminalise domestic violence. The Act only criminalises the violation of a protection order (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:8-9).

Sub-theme 1.5 Factors contributing to domestic violence

The interviews showed that there is a wide range of common factors that contribute to the occurrence of domestic violence. In addition to the common factors, social service professionals mentioned that factors such as jealousy, low self-esteem, stress, lack of respect, communication, children, and victims also play a role. The following factors were highlighted by the participants:

- **Structural factors**

There are structural factors that condone violence in families through unequal power, where men possess power over women (Barnett et al., 2011:5). Issues of power and control have always perpetuated different forms of violence including women abuse (Davis, 2008:23). This was affirmed by the following comment made by one social service professional:

SP4 *Eh, women are made to be seen or are made to see themselves as being weak.*

- **Idealisation of family and cultural beliefs**

Violence is often perpetuated by the idealisation of the family and cultural beliefs where violence is accepted and where the cultural activities encourage men to view themselves as superior to women (Barnett et al., 2011:5,6). This view is supported by Davis (2008:5) who alludes that in certain settings patriarchy leads men to a belief that they have a right to control women as part of their culture. This is what one social service professional had to say:

SP7 *And also the culture, traditions can also contribute to domestic violence because they will say maybe men they are superior like...*

- **Cultural practices**

It is important to mention that while there are cultural practices that yield positive rewards, there are also those that are harmful, especially towards women and children (Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014:28). Normalised cultural practices such as *lobola* and

ukuthwala embraced in diverse cultures, place women at a higher risk of being violated (CSV, 2016:8). This factor was highlighted by one social service professional:

SP4 *The in-laws play a big role in your marriage. When you get married, you marry to build a relationship, and you bring two families together. They are the ones who are normally like yah; she is our daughter-in-law. We married her, and she belongs to us now. So it means that we are in charge. They will like to control you and if you say no to that; then you are this mean person, you are disrespectful. And it creates conflict between you and your husband.*

- **Substance abuse**

There is a strong correlation between domestic violence and substance abuse (Ross, 2010:115). The CSV (2016:2) makes a similar claim by stating that the perpetrators of domestic violence are very often found to be indulging in different forms of substance abuse. This was reiterated in the following statement made by one social service professional:

SP6 *And sometimes alcohol, although it's not the cause, but it can also contribute towards you know if eh somebody takes too much of alcohol, he can lose focus and control.*

- **Social tolerance, acceptance of violence and economic factors**

There is an elevated level of social tolerance and acceptance of violence in societies where women are depicted as the weaker gender and often as sex objects (Barnett et al., 2011:6). Of greater concern is the fact that women repeatedly accept the abuse as a way of life due to their low societal status (Davies & Dreyer, 2014:7; Mapp, 2012:262). Women's economic vulnerability makes it impossible for them to escape their domestic situation, thereby forcing them to embrace the abuse (Reichert, 2012:447). Consequently, women's high economic status can also place them at risk of being abused by their partners as men have been socialised into viewing themselves as the bread-winners and providers (CSV, 2016:12). Social service professionals reflected on these factors in this manner:

SP4 *So is like women are seen as objects. They are seen as worthless objects. And again I can say women are also made to be seen as objects of pleasure.*

SP1 *Some situations may result from financial issues. In a situation where the man is working, and the wife is not working and is dependent on the man; he can feel a need to abuse me...*

SP4 *Or it could be because maybe the husband feels inferior because my wife is providing for me. So... and finding that the wife is not complaining or doing anything wrong but you as the husband because of that man ego, you feel that as a husband I should be the one providing for my family, not the other way round.*

- **History of physical and child abuse**

Studies show that children who grew up in the families where abuse was prevalent are more likely to suffer it again as adults or become perpetrators thereof (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014:2; Mathews & Benvenuti, 2014:29-30; Matope et al., 2013:196). Furthermore, a woman with a history of physical or sexual abuse is more likely to end up in an unhealthy relationship characterised by violence (Keeling & Mason, 2008:40). This was confirmed by women exposed to domestic violence, as one woman said the following:

WP1 *You know I lived life and once I was in here I realised if I looked to women in my own family, my mum's first marriage... abuse physical; my mum's second marriage to my father... abuse mental; my elder sister marriage to her husband... physical abuse; my second eldest sister... physical abuse; my third sister... physical abuse. I come from a family of abuse.*

The findings confirm that domestic violence can be seen as emanating from an interplay between several factors (such as individual, community, economic, cultural and religious) occurring at different levels in society (CSVN, 2016:2). The findings also affirm human rights analysis claims that the causes and factors leading to domestic violence are rooted in unequal power relations between men and women, perpetuated by systematic gender-based discrimination and various other forms of oppression against women (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:75). The complexity of the factors leading to domestic violence explains why this form of violence is perceived as a violation of human rights and why it mainly affects women (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:29).

Sub-theme 1.6 Impact of domestic violence on victims

The impact and consequences of domestic violence are generally devastating for both the survivor and the family (Keeling & Mason, 2008:3). The interviews showed that domestic violence is a violation of human rights as it leads to consequences such as harmful psychological effects, physical injuries, homelessness, and a negative economic impact on victims.

- **Psychological and physical impact**

Social service professionals indicated that domestic violence could lead to harmful psychological and physical consequences for victims. These are some of the expressions in this regard:

SP1 *She becomes affected mentally, and this is picked up during intake when she narrates her story. When you listen to the story, you hear that this person is mentally disturbed to the point where we contact the doctor that we are working in partnership with.*

SP2 *The fact is that she is no longer the way she was when she was born. She now has a disability because of this thing of... you understand!*

Some of the women exposed to domestic violence had the following to say concerning the psychological and physical impact of abuse on them:

WP2 *...emotionally I was not fine, and I had this thing that maybe there is something wrong with me.*

WP3 *My abuse started in 2003, and it started getting worse and worse and worse 'til I ended up the last time in hospital.*

Domestic violence has a negative impact on women's health (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:29). The findings support the view of Buzana et al. (2012:47) that the impact is far worse than the actual act of violence, leaving women with life-long internal scars with physical abuse more likely to result in mental impairment. The findings also support a claim that of the total population suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the survivors of domestic violence constitute a larger number (Buzana et al., 2012:47).

- **Homelessness**

The interviews showed that homelessness remains one of the challenging factors faced by women exposed to domestic violence. This is what one social service professional had to say:

SP7 *Like eh as they came here they were seeking for a shelter it means because each and every person has a right to a shelter and then now they are stuck, they don't have a shelter.*

This is what one woman exposed to domestic violence had to say:

WP3 *At the moment I need a place to move out of here which is a challenge. Uhm and that's one of the challenges that I am facing at the moment is to find the place. That's the biggest challenge because I've got to be out of here by the end of this month.*

Findings confirm the view that abused women may end up homeless or experience difficulties to secure and maintain housing, which can be seen as one of the consequences surrounding this form of violence (Ross, 2010:103). Melbin et al. (2003:2) identify the inability to afford housing as one of the long-term effects abused women experience in an attempt to break free from their abuser. In a domestic violence setting, women are often left with no choice but to leave their homes in order to escape the abuse (Ross, 2010:106). While such a decision minimises the chances of being abused, it at the same time increases the risk of becoming homeless (Ross, 2010:106).

- **Economic impact**

The interviews revealed that domestic violence can have a negative economic impact on women. This is what one social service professional had to say:

SP5 *So they start fighting over that issue even though all along she was working and doing everything for herself. All of a sudden he tells her that she must quit her job and look after the children.*

One woman exposed to domestic violence expressed her situation in this manner:

WP3 *But unfortunately, I was not allowed to work there because it was beneath my status.*

These findings show that violence jeopardises women's ability to play a role in economic and social development (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:8). Unfortunately, for most women, the fact that the perpetrators are often the sole providers, has major

implications for their fate, especially in the absence of immediate remedial services (Reichert, 2012:447). The conference report by the CSVR (2008:5) perceives this as a grave concern because a society cannot fully develop while victims of abuse experience devastating economic effects.

Sub-theme 1.7 Relevance of feminism as a lens in understanding domestic violence

Factors connected to domestic violence and its impact have led to feminism's response to the issues affecting women by challenging the state of affairs related to the oppression of women and the desire to change it, replacing it with a more equitable social order (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:235). All social service professionals agreed with an assertion made by feminism that women are more oppressed in society as compared to men, often leading to violence against women due to a status of inferiority (Ghorfati & Medini, 2015:7), indicating the relevance of feminism in the context of domestic violence. The views of the participants can be captured in the following expression made by one social service professional:

SP3 *I am in agreement. It's still applicable even today that statement. Because [Laughs] for the mere fact that we have shelters, women are vulnerable in society. So the mere fact that we have shelters and we are saying, I know right now there are shelters for men; but there are more shelters for women than for men. So we are still saying it's okay for a woman to leave her house and go to the shelter. Even equality we have not reached it because our own law still says do protection order and this and that. Why is the perpetrator not removed immediately when violence has occurred? Why should I be the one to run around and with the children worst part!*

The findings affirm a perspective on violence against women from a feminist framework. This framework stipulates that the occurrence of violence against women at different levels in society stems from a patriarchal setting where violence by men against women and children is normalised for men to preserve their privileged position (Women's House Shelta, 2009:7). Feminist perspectives and theories are relevant within the context of domestic violence as they offer paradigmatic ways of understanding the patriarchal culture (Orme, 2009:69), a culture that is at the root of domestic violence.

Sub-theme 1.8 Needs that women have upon leaving abusive relationships

The interviews revealed that women are faced with many challenges when leaving abusive relationships. These are some of the expressions given by women exposed to domestic violence:

WP2 *I had no money; I had no place, I had no... I didn't even know what to do.*

WP1 *Okay, I needed everything. I had no financial support from the outside. I literally... when I came here I needed underwear; I needed clothing, uhm all toiletries... I even needed medication.*

The impact of violence, as well as the kind of needs that women develop as a result of violence, is the reason why, across the world, governmental organisations and shelters are faced with the huge task of responding to the needs of women who encounter challenges in their effort to escape abusive partners (Stensrud, 2005:2). Given these consequences, Payne and Wermeling (2009:4) emphasise the importance of social services in response to the needs of victims in need of help. Mpani and Nsibande (2015:30) suggest that such social services should be comprehensive and must include support such as shelters, as well as accessibility to all the necessary psychosocial services.

3.4.2.2 Theme 2: Services rendered by shelters

This theme revealed that shelters play a crucial role in responding to the needs of women exposed to domestic violence. This role was unpacked under the following sub-themes.

Sub-theme 2.1 Nature of services

Social service professionals, as well as women exposed to domestic violence, reported that shelters offer a variety of services with the main services focusing on the meeting of basic needs, services to children, counselling, and skills development. Other services include financial support, health services and assistance with documents. This is how the social service professionals expressed it:

SP6 *We offer accommodation, temporary accommodation and basic needs such as food, clothing, toiletries.*

SP1 *And if the child is traumatised by what he saw happening to the mother, social workers intervene by talking to the child about the situation. You find that the child is not coping; things like that!*

- SP4** *Firstly it's counselling; it's the basic therapy; that's the basic one. And in terms of counselling, it's individual counselling and also participating in group sessions.*
- SP6** *Yah we do help them with skills programme where they learn various skills like sewing, knitting, bead work, baking skills.*
- SP5** *And then we also help them financially if maybe one is looking for a job and then has to go for an interview, we give them transport money.*
- SP2** *And then we also transport them, we refer them maybe to the hospital if the person needs to be... to get medical care, they are been transported there.*
- SP3** *Then is the matter of accompanying her to the home affairs, writing referrals to home affairs, to schools, to wherever maybe for those documentations and then yah.*

Women exposed to domestic violence alluded to the rendered services. This can be seen in these expressions:

- WP2** *Okay uhm the toiletries they give; food eh... and eh... place to sleep yah and then they do offer us clothes...*
- WP3** *I couldn't even walk out of here for fear, and the counselling helped me. Eh, we've got a very good social worker here, a resident social worker. She's very caring, very loving.*
- WP4** *Okay, I'm in a programme whereby they teach you how to gain skills...*

These findings show that shelters play a significant role in ensuring continuous safety for the victims and providing other necessary resources. This is required, as the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (2006:2) contends that without the necessary resources such as those offered by the shelters, the promotion of human rights for abused women cannot be fully realised. Findings also confirm the view of Lyon et al. (2008:22) that in the era of emergence, the services offered by the shelters were mostly limited to the provision of beds and short-term support. At present, there is a variety of services offered to the women exposed to domestic violence, such as the provision of emergency shelters, support groups, crisis lines, counselling, and advocacy (Lyon et al., 2008:22).

Sub-theme 2.2 Intake criteria

The interviews with social service professionals showed that intake criteria differ according to the shelters. This can be seen in the following expressions by participants from three shelters:

SP1 *We don't discriminate. However, the person must fit criteria. Like if a woman is homeless we don't take her.*

SP6 *Yes, all of them. Blind people they come; they won't even tell you that this person is blind. You will just see when she comes in. If there is an element of domestic abuse.*

SP7 *Uhm we accommodate women who are abused, but we also say we accommodate women who are in crisis. That means we don't discriminate; we don't specifically say abuse because if the person is in crisis, they might have abuse background and so on. So we do accommodate them as well.*

There is some form of confusion when it comes to age criteria for admission of victims. This can be seen in the following expressions:

SP5 *Is just that it's... no, the age... It doesn't say what. It just says eighteen then open.*

SP1 *Nineteen we can take her. We do admissions from nineteen. But we are supposed to start at twenty. But if she is nineteen, we can still take her.*

One participant expressed concern over the age of admission criteria when it comes to older persons:

SP6 *But really elderly people sometimes it's a... it's a... you find that it's like re-victimising a person. I mean the environment itself... We've had a pensioner who was abused by her children. So I mean she just felt like when the girls; other women are laughing, she thinks that they are laughing at her.*

One participant expressed frustration over the fact that there is no clear guideline in terms of the kind of abuse that victims were exposed to and the admission criteria.

This is what she had to say:

SP4 *Who we should cater for, yes. In terms of our admission criteria, it's just abuse; what type of abuse? From your partner or from your family member or from a neighbour?*

Another challenge has to do with the accommodation of male children, and this is what one social service professionals had to say:

SP6 *But especially if it's boys; boys we don't take older boys. For girls we do... uhm we do over stretch. We take them. We had a fifteen years old girl. Mm, we do have a family room, but we normally use that bedroom for if a mum comes with a bigger child. But no boys at all. Boys it's a no, no, no. Four years strictly yah.*

Findings confirmed the assertions of both Ross (2010:105) and Watson and Lopes (2017:5) that abused women are often excluded from accessing shelters due to strict intake criteria, which include age, number of children and their gender, citizenship status, mental health, and history of substance abuse. The issue of limits on sheltering boys is a long-standing challenge that was identified as one of the most common problems found by Lyon et al. (2008:13-14). These findings support the view of Bhana et al. (2012:12) and Lopes (2013:2) who strongly believe that some of the challenges arise because there is no legislation in South Africa to regulate shelters rendering services to victims of domestic violence.

Sub-theme 2.3 Period of stay

Generally, the minimum period of stay is three months and the maximum six months. However, there is a grace period depending on the merits of each case. This is what one social service professional had to say:

SP5 *But it does not mean that after three to six months we chase them out. It will depend on your progress and social worker's discussions with the family.*

One of the women exposed to domestic violence reported having received an extension and had this to say:

WP3 *I'm having challenges that financially I don't have the means to move out and I've already been like okay basically our time here is three months. I've overstayed my time. They have been lenient with me, and now I realise that I need to give back. I cannot force them to allow me to stay any longer.*

One social service professional felt that the period of stay is not sufficient, often leading victims to go back to the perpetrator. This is how she expressed it:

SP2 *But I feel the time they are given to stay in the shelter is limited. Although they cannot stay in a shelter forever but I feel that they don't have enough time to think things through. Sometimes they feel the pressure that now my time here is up, and I haven't had time to clear myself or to get myself ready then they feel that I should go back to the perpetrator at least that's where I feel safe. Although I'm being violated; but I'm provided for.*

On the contrary, one social service professional felt that the period is long enough and this is how she expressed it:

SP4 *So that's why I'm saying six months is too long. No! Not necessarily that after three months emotionally you are okay, but you can live independently. Come just for counselling just continue, continue with support only not that you depend on that organisation for everything; for survival or financial or security.*

The findings confirm Melbin's et al. (2003:2) argument that even in cases where women can access shelters, this type of housing arrangement is only on a short-term basis. Stensrud (2005:13) echoes the same sentiments by stating that while shelters provide the women with safety and economic opportunities during their stay, this is only a temporary remedy. The view that the period of stay is not long enough has also been raised by other social workers elsewhere who felt that the period of accommodation in shelters is not sufficient to prepare women to exit abusive relationships and set up new housing arrangements (Watson & Lopes, 2017:5). There is a suggestion to extend services to long-term as short-term services often result in re-victimisation (Western Cape Department of Social Development; 2014:62-63).

Sub-theme 2.4 Exit strategy

The interviews showed that an exit strategy includes continued support such as aftercare services focusing on home visits, food parcels, starter packs, referrals, and telephonic interviews. These are some of the expressions by social service professionals:

SP7 *We've got after care whereby they drop-in like after the woman has exited, then she would come for drop-in for food parcels. But if maybe someone is going somewhere like far, we are going to accompany the person and after that we will keep on calling to check how she is. If she's around Pretoria we do follow-ups like home visits to check if the person is fine.*

SP4 *Maybe they found employment and found accommodation somewhere we give them stuff like just to set up their place. We give them furniture, linen, utensils; cutlery and we transport them to the place.*

The findings on exit strategies are in line with the view of Lyon et al. (2008:4) that shelters are of great help, especially those that promote sustainable exit strategies in assisting women who are trying to separate from the abusive partners. The findings also correlate with the assertion of Tually et al. (2008:3) that although there is no single

solution to homelessness resulting from domestic violence, safe and secure housing, as well as the provision of continuous support, are the most critical aspects in responding to the challenge.

Sub-theme 2.5 Relevance of the Victim Empowerment Programme in shelters

Social service professionals indicated that the Victim Empowerment Programme is relevant in the shelters because shelters are one of the resources used as a vehicle to address the consequences of domestic violence as required by the National Policy Guideline for Victim Empowerment (Department of Social Development, 2009:3). Their views have been echoed in the following expression made by one participant:

SP6 *In that Victim Empowerment Programme... at least with the Victim Empowerment Programme we have shelters, and we also have the... women are being empowered with the skills that I have been mentioning. You know it involves a lot of eh at least victim empowerment because it embraces all this different eh professionals.*

Findings show that shelters are working towards meeting the aim of the Victim Empowerment Programme which is to empower the victims in such a way that they can move away from the harm caused by crime or violence by creating an environment that ensures that no further harm will be experienced (Department of Social Development, 2009:3).

Although the Victim Empowerment Programme champions itself to respond to the needs of domestic violence victims, the programme has been criticised by Bhana et al. (2012:9) for failing to attend to the needs of abused women. Participants however reported that the Victim Empowerment Programme is relevant within the context of shelters and no dissatisfaction was reported.

Sub-theme 2.6 Challenges women face in shelters

Women exposed to domestic violence revealed that much of the challenges experienced have to do with conflicts amongst the women in the shelters. Some participants mentioned the issue of clothing and harsh treatment by some of the social service professionals. This is how the participants expressed it:

WP3 *They talk about you, gossiping; that's very rife. Then it becomes this group if you have a problem and your roommate is with that group, and this one is with the other group, and you are out.*

WP5 *I have not received any clothes in good conditions. I take them even if they are old because I am poor.*

It is however not in all the shelters where clothing was an issue, and this is what one participant from another shelter had to say:

WP1 *Uhm yeah like I said clothing if you need clothing you go to their shop, you get clothing. Eh if you desperately needed something that is not available in their shop they made effort to find money and buy you what you needed.*

One frustrated woman had this to say regarding harsh treatment given by some of the social service professionals:

WP4 *The social worker would say yeah you can be able to use the computer but when it comes to the people that you are supposed to approach; "You are a woman in this place." Like they take us down as if we are nothing like as a woman you are a beggar.*

In contrast with the above response, this is what another woman in a different shelter had to say regarding treatment received from social service professionals:

WP1 *Well, the interaction between staff and clients is sharp. There can never be a lady who says they approached social worker and not be assisted. Your house mother is there to help you. She's not your enemy; she's your friend. She's your house mother if you need something, she's your mother yeah.*

These findings confirm that while the idea of a shelter might seem like a straightforward solution, there are numerous challenges women experience once they access these shelters (Stensrud, 2005:2). The issue of conflict amongst residents is a long-standing issue that has been identified as one of the most common problems found by Lyon et al. (2008:13-14). Regarding harsh treatment, similar experiences have been reported elsewhere, where women experienced a negative attitude and lack of empathy and sympathy from social workers in the shelters (Stensrud, 2005:16).

Sub-theme 2.7 Ways to improve services

The interviews showed that women exposed to domestic violence are generally satisfied with the services that they are receiving. In terms of the improvements, women suggested a need for more counselling and empowerment opportunities. These are some of their expressions:

WP3 *Uhm we need more counselling, more professional counselling let's put it that way. Because the one social worker that we have cannot be counselling all the people; so we do have the auxiliary staff that helps with the counselling.*

WP2 *Maybe organise those people, ask if can't you take some women who can be able to do things such as this because if ever you have money you can think straight. Not like I have to go find something by myself where I will learn something. Because if I know how to sew and I'm well equipped like every day when I'm in the shelter I'm learning everything I'll catch up fast because it is something every day.*

In another shelter, the above challenges were not experienced, which becomes evident from the following expression:

WP1 *Eh, individually I spoke to both Zodwa and Violet (Pseudonyms used for anonymity) Eh, in the beginning, it was Zodwa and then if Zodwa was not available, then it was Violet. But the nice part about it was that other social worker was always available. Shelter 1 changed my life. I must be very honest. Uhm I could have ended up anywhere. I would never have been benefitted anywhere as much as I have been benefitted from Shelter 1, I wouldn't have.*

These findings as related to improvements have financial implications (Bhana et al., 2012:66; Stone et al., 2013:3) and often inevitably lead to closure or reduction of services (Watson & Lopes, 2017:6). Financial constraints are directly linked to lack of funding, a challenge faced by shelters in rendering services to women exposed to domestic violence (Bhana et al., 2012:66; Stone et al., 2013:3). Although shelters have been considered a critical strategy in addressing the domestic violence crisis, there is little commitment by the State to ensure that these services are well funded (Stone et al., 2013:3). Consequently, an inadequate budget results in shelters having to compromise on the quality of the programmes offered as well as suspension of certain services and retrenchment of staff (Lopes, 2013:4).

3.4.2.3 Theme 3: Human rights practice

The interviews showed that participants are knowledgeable about human rights to a certain extent. However, it can also be said that some elements of human rights practice that are not well comprehended. This will be discussed in the following sub-themes.

Sub-theme 3.1 Understanding/comprehension of the term human rights

Both social service professionals and women exposed to domestic violence were able to articulate their understanding of human rights. There is no difference in the manner in which both parties understand human rights. These are some of the expressions:

SP2 *People have got rights. I have rights... okay, people... human rights, everybody have got rights to do everything that they want. People... we've got rights for education, for living, to breath, to health, water, and our human rights is so good because it doesn't limit anyone to do anything.*

SP6 *Human rights, when we are talking about human rights we're talking about the ehh shared values like respect uhm person would be treating people like you know equality, people are equal, no discrimination, fairness yah where the person is free maybe to... to... to uhm to talk you know to talk or to... to... to ask for information.*

WP2 *But I believe it's all about dignity; people being respected; how I do things; how I feel; how I want to be called or how I want... you know. That's how I think the human rights is all about, but mainly to be treated equally with others and with dignity.*

Findings show that participants are knowledgeable about different rights enjoyed by all people across the world such as the right to life, equality, human dignity, freedom, security, health, education, privacy, the right to vote, and an adequate standard of living (The Constitution of the RSA, 1996:5-9; SHRC, 2009:7). Responses also touched on provision made by the Bill of Rights that "...enshrines the rights of all the people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom" (The Constitution of the RSA, 1996:5).

Sub-theme 3.2 Knowledge of South African human rights legislation and human rights entitlements

The South African Human Rights Commission Act No. 40 of 2013 seeks to promote respect for human rights and a culture of human rights by ensuring that there are development and attainment of human rights in the Republic. The interviews showed that the majority of women exposed to domestic violence are not aware of legislation guiding human rights in the country.

When it comes to the knowledge of human rights women are entitled to in South Africa, women exposed to domestic violence indicated that there are three categories; those who know, those who do not know and those who choose not to know. On the other

hand, social service professionals have limited knowledge of a human rights culture, a culture that the legislation seeks to promote.

This is what women exposed to domestic violence said regarding their knowledge of human rights legislation:

WP2 *I think I once heard of it, but that was long ago. That was year 2001. Yes, before they changed and changed and changed.*

WP1 *I must be very honest with you. I am not clued up when it comes to all of that, not at all.*

Only one woman was able to mention some of the related legislation that addresses the issue of human rights. This is how she expressed it:

WP4 *Domestic Violence Act is one of the legislations that... and the children's right act. And as well the one that I know is working hand in hand with this is the Constitution of South Africa which actually explains the Bill of rights of a person.*

Women exposed to domestic violence had this to say regarding the category of women who are knowledgeable about their human rights entitlements:

WP2 *I think maybe because they... some they google, some they attend workshops, some because they are studying or making researches those that know about the human rights.*

Women generally indicated that the majority of women who do not know about their human rights entitlements are in villages and rural areas. This can be seen in the following expression:

WP3 *Like in the villages they don't know because one there is no libraries there and life there is totally different from urban areas. When you come and tell them this is not right, they feel like you are speaking a taboo because they don't have any access. They are in total darkness.*

Some of the women believed that women in urban areas choose not to know. This is how one participant expressed it:

WP2 *Because if you are in urban areas, there is much information. If you want to know anything about any information you can get it. That's why I say they choose not...*

The interviews showed that social service professionals do not understand the concept of a human rights culture very well. Some participants made attempts to explain it while some could not. This can be seen in the following expressions:

SP6 *A culture where a human rights culture it's a culture that eh really takes a person you know not discriminating or undermining. It's a culture that respects a person as he is irrespective of where she comes from or whether he's educated or what. It's a culture that really eh that embraces human eh another person. And accepts, also accepts, accept one another.*

SP4 *I don't understand; the culture of human rights? No. The culture of human rights I don't know.*

Findings showed that both social service professionals and women exposed to domestic violence are not familiar with the South African Human Rights Commission Act No. 40 of 2013 which serves as the legislation for human rights promotion and human rights culture in the country. Lack of knowledge on human rights legislation partially explains why there has always been a constant struggle to ensure that all human rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural) are equally guaranteed to women (Reichert, 2012:451).

These findings of a lack of knowledge on women's human rights entitlements may be one of the reasons why despite all the efforts made through human rights declarations, Mapp (2012:249) still raises a concern that those who are oppressed in society always have difficulties accessing the rights guaranteed to them by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The majority of those affected are women, and they continue to hold a subordinate status in most societies (Mapp, 2012:249) especially those in rural areas, as revealed by the findings.

Sub-theme 3.3 Human rights activities in shelters

The interviews revealed that there are different human rights activities taking place in the shelters through educational activities, life skills, workshops, and meeting of basic needs. These are some of the expressions given by social service professionals:

SP2 *Once a month or two months we have a human rights lawyer that comes here to address women; that talk to them about anything and they ask her all the questions that they want to ask her. They do have a... DVD that they also watch in regarding human rights and everything. And even in their group*

sessions, there is where they speak about human rights and everything on that group therapy that they do.

SP4 *The activities of human rights like with the... because we have the posters from the Department of Justice and others, we get from the Department of Social Development. As you can go through the house, there is a poster whereby each and every client can read for themselves. But even though we educate them about them, but also for them to see that if this happens to me, this is what I can do.*

SP3 *You know human rights has sheltering inside; it has food, it has education and other things. So I think for the mere fact that we shelter them and they have food that...*

Women exposed to domestic violence confirmed that there has been an awareness of human rights since arriving at the shelter. These are some of the expressions:

WP3 *We do have a lot of human rights workshops and they explain to you what is your rights.*

WP5 *Like that, you must not be abused as a woman or stay in abusive relationship because you can't do things for yourself because you are not working. You must stand up and do things for yourself.*

One woman reported having had knowledge before arrival at the shelter. This is how she expressed it:

WP4 *... in fact I started knowing about human rights out of this place. When I was... I was actively involved with political people whereby I had to motivate the people about what happened to me and how did I overcome it.*

These findings show that shelters play a crucial role in adhering to South Africa's obligation to establish measures necessary to ensure compliance with international and regional human rights treaties (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:13). These findings show that shelters are one of the mechanisms used in ensuring that women's rights are protected and promoted, as countries that have endorsed the international treaties on fighting violence against women have an obligation to put the necessary measures in place (Columbia Law School, 2010:6,19). This is important because South Africa is a signatory to both the international and regional treaties and to the protocols that seek to promote and protect women's human rights (Mpani & Nsibande, 2015:13).

Human rights activities in shelters are working towards meeting the goal of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, which calls on states to condemn violence against women and to work towards its eradication (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:74). In terms of this Convention, all the spheres of government, more specifically the political, social, economic and cultural spheres, are expected to put measures in place to ensure the advancement of women in as far as human rights are concerned (CEDAW of 1979).

Sub-theme 3.4 Human rights violations

In terms of violation of human rights, social service professionals indicated that domestic violence violates women's human rights in a number of ways. There are also instances where social service professionals believed that violation of human rights had taken place within the shelters. This is how the participants expressed it:

SP2 *[Breaths heavily] they become... they come here shattered. Their freedom has been taken away from them. Their emotions have been torn apart like they are everywhere. They don't know whether they are going or they are coming. They feel like they do not have rights of doing or owning anything.*

SP6 *Yah abuse is violating their rights like if someone is maybe physically abusing someone or financially. I mean she's been denied of her rights. Nobody has to harm another person. It's violating the rights.*

One social service professional felt that services at times violate the rights of the women and this is how she expressed it:

SP4 *...like our organisation is linked to a Church... It's a Church organisation. If there are functions at the Church... if we take them and say go and assist there... It's so irrelevant. They are not supposed to do that. It's not supposed to be... to happen like that. But we do it. When there is something happening there, they come and ask that there is this and this happening at the Church, and I would like the ladies to come and assist. And if you don't have a valid reason for you not to go then, it means that you are refusing to do what we say you must do. And they normally don't refuse because they think that if I don't go, I'll be chased out of the shelter. And we made them to think like uhm what can I say... without us you are nothing. Is like we are "gods" somehow. Is like when you see us you have to bow before us. Yah sometimes yah it's not nice.*

These findings show that domestic violence qualifies as a violation of human rights due to cruelty associated with the factors leading to the act, as well as its devastating consequences. Mpani and Nsibandé (2015:8) argue that domestic violence is a human rights issue, which has a negative impact on the victims as well as society. There is no doubt that domestic violence violates the Bill of Rights set out for all South Africans in the Constitution of the Republic (Furusa & Limberg, 2015:9).

The findings of the violation at the hands of shelters confirm the assertion by Ife (2012:233) that from a human rights perspective, social service professionals are perceived as potential violators of human rights. For this reason, the Columbia Law School (2010:19) strongly argues that states must adhere to the international law on human rights by ensuring that government agents, as well as non-governmental agents, refrain from human rights abuses.

3.4.2.4 Theme 4: Social welfare services

The discussions under this theme showed that the developmental approach to social welfare services is not fully comprehended in terms of theoretical understanding, but it becomes partially evident in practice. This will be discussed under the following sub-themes.

Sub-theme 4.1 Understanding of the term developmental social welfare approach

Some of the social service professionals understand the term developmental social welfare approach, although their understanding centres around the exclusion of a rights-based approach. Some social service professionals indicated not having any knowledge of the developmental approach. Although the term developmental approach is not understood in terms of the inclusion of rights-based approach; the interviews showed that there has been a shift from the traditional to the developmental approach in terms of how services are rendered.

These are some of the expressions related to an understanding of the term developmental social welfare approach:

SP3 *Developmental approach according to my understanding is being equipped in areas... That is my own definition. Being equipped and with those equipment's... knowing how to use them; to utilise them. That is development*

in all areas your financial; your spiritual; your emotions; your everything. That is development to me.

SP4 *The term itself explains itself development. You have to develop the person... not create dependency. Develop them, empower them. Give them what they need to survive to take care of themselves out there.*

These are the views of participants who lacked understanding:

SP2 *I don't know what it is and I have never heard of it. Maybe I'm not reading news anymore.*

SP1 *Uhm...I don't know how to put it. Eh honestly speaking this question... sometimes you find that some of the things you see them but don't pay attention to them.*

The following expressions were made in respect of a shift from the traditional to a developmental welfare:

SP7 *Uhm as I said like with our skills development like I think we are not focused more on the counselling because I know that as they learn to do the skills like sewing, it is part of developing a person. We are not creating dependency; we are saying that like learn this so that it can help you in the future. So as they learn it is part of therapy but they are also learning a skill that they would use in the future.*

SP6 *I think women get more empowered. Yah to grow personally and to gain skills and to be able to make a very uhm eh relevant decisions about their lives. There is no dictation it's the person herself who will be empowered with skills, knowledge uhm.*

These findings show that social service professionals have not fully comprehended the adoption of the White Paper for Social Welfare which articulates that "...social welfare services and programmes will be based on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa" (RSA, Ministry for Social Welfare and Population Development, 1997:11). This is so because social service professionals' articulation of the developmental social welfare approach falls short of inclusion of the rights-based approach. Hence Ife (2012:229) laments that social service professionals should at all times strive to find a balance between theory and practice by testing each other through reflective learning or praxis.

The findings show that there has been a paradigm shift, as suggested by Patel (2015:196), who states that the new direction taken by the White Paper on social welfare services required a paradigm shift in social service delivery from a social treatment model to a developmental service delivery model. However, the inclusion of human rights is still absent in the shift that has been reported by social service professionals. This is possibly why Ife (2012:11) argues that the biggest challenge with human rights practice stems from the fact that there is little articulation of what it means in practice for professionals to claim that their work is based on human rights. As such, the human rights concept remains a noble idea, which is largely challenged when it comes to practice (Ife, 2012:11).

Sub-theme 4.2 Theories and/or approaches guiding social welfare services

The interviews showed that social service professionals rely mostly on traditional theories, rather than developmental approaches that are pro-human rights. Even for one participant who reported using the developmental approach, there is an absence of the rights-based approach at the centre of it. These are some of the expressions:

SP3 *Yoh! Like I said it's holistic. So many approaches strengths-based approach; PCA approach; problem-solving approach; so many theories that you can think of. It depends on the individual's case. Eco system.*

SP6 *Normally I use the Person-Centred. Mm, it works. It works well for me.*

There is only one participant who reported the use of the developmental approach and this is how she expressed it:

SP4 *Developmental. Yah the reason why we are not just focusing on PCA, there are... you should also develop the person because to sit here and just say what I hear you say is this and that and that... If the person is not employed; is unemployed and when they leave here they do not even know what they are going to do with their lives because eventually this is not a permanent place. They are going leave the shelter. So you should make sure that you empower them with whatever it is that they need in order for them to face the real world out there.*

Other participants were not sure about the theories or approaches being followed. These are some of the expressions:

SP7 *I am not sure about those ones. But I know theories it's those psychological theory whereby yah therapy it's done.*

SP5 *Behavioural approach... is that the one? What do they call it?*

The findings show that there is stagnancy in terms of theories as traditional theories are dominant. This can be understood in the words of Gil (2013:1) who says that social workers and other social service professionals often lack theoretical insights in what causes dehumanising conditions, and which strategies can be used to transform an unjust and oppressive society. Findings can also be understood in terms of Lombard's (2007:295) assertion that although the White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997 provides a clear guideline in terms of the policy framework, there have been challenges with its implementation.

3.4.2.5 Theme 5: Role of social services in promoting human rights

This theme showed that human rights are embedded in the social service profession; hence the language of human rights practice is not well embraced in its own right as seen in the previous theme. Incorporation of human rights within the social service profession was seen through emerging sub-themes such as the promotion of human rights principles through social services as well as the role of social service profession principles in promoting human rights as will be discussed below.

Sub-theme 5.1 Promotion of human rights principles through social services

Social service professionals, including social workers and social policy professionals, are always engaging with the victims of injustices and oppression, thus requiring them to deploy strategies that promote the holistic wellbeing of the victims, including the promotion of human rights (Gil, 2013:1). For social work to reach its ultimate goal of creating a better society, human rights principles should be integrated into both social work practice and policy (Reichert, 2011:217). Interviews showed that there are a number of ways in which human rights principles are promoted in the shelters through social services. The six principles of human rights namely, participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, empowerment, and legality (SHRC, 2009: 11) were discussed in the following manner:

- **Participation**

Clients' participation should be a prerequisite for human rights practice as asserted by Ife (2012:186). Participants indicated that there are a number of ways in which women

exposed to domestic violence participate in the shelter, such as through suggestions, house meetings, house rules, decision-making, leadership role in programmes, and evaluations of the programmes. This can be seen in the following expression:

SP3 *Yah in our shelter we... women are allowed you know are given eh opportunity to voice out like we... the shelter has been running for years. But then it doesn't mean that it has to be that rigid. If one comes with a suggestion to say that you know I'm thinking that this furniture or these things, we talk about that.*

Women exposed to domestic violence confirmed having meetings, and this is how one expressed it:

WP2 *Yah we do have meetings they call it house meetings they happen almost every week unless there is something that came up then we don't have. Where we would sit and they will ask what it is that makes us happy or not happy.*

Social service professionals mentioned that women exposed to domestic violence are part of decision making and this can be seen in the following expression:

SP6 *But the final decision is theirs. But the social worker doesn't just leave knowing that you know we have to go deeper into that 'How are you going to? If you decide to start this, how are you going to do it and don't you think that there will be consequences' or things like that.*

Women exposed to domestic violence alluded to making their own decisions. This is how one participant expressed it:

WP3 *No here we are not forced to do anything. That's what I love... I like it because we are given a choice here. In anything that we do, if you don't want to do that thing you are never compelled to do it.*

One social service professional felt that decision making is only limited to social work matters. This is how she expressed it:

SP4 *Yah they take decisions in terms of uhm like normally in terms of counselling sessions. In terms of counselling sessions only or maybe let me say eh in terms of eh social... social work services only. But in terms of other things like uhm remember I mentioned before that there are some activities that they are being forced to participate in! And there is no room to say no.*

Social service professionals reported that women participate in terms of house rules. This can be seen in the following expression:

SP5 *We give them that opportunity of raising whatever or the concerns like I just mentioned with the rules. We go through the rules, and we ask them do you have anything to suggest or what? Yah we talk openly about all those things. We want them to fully participate in the house.*

One of the women exposed to domestic violence had this to say concerning the house rules:

WP3 *But what we do is we have house meetings and the first ten when we started maybe the first ten rules are being discussed. Maybe if it's not suitable to some of the ladies, is being restructured.*

Some of the women exposed to violence reported not being involved in the rules. These are some of the expressions:

WP2 *At the moment I haven't been in any way because I just found this organisation here.*

WP5 *The house rules are already drafted when we got here.*

Women's participation is also promoted by allowing them to take the lead in programmes and this is how one social service professional expressed it:

SP7 *We allow them to lead some of the programmes like if we see a potential in one of the women, we know okay she's fast and yes we allow her to lead us and participate.*

However, it seems like the role of taking the lead is limited because this is what one woman exposed to domestic violence had to say in this regard:

WP4 *I wanted to do some practical session here, but they said because of I am a woman in this place I cannot be able. I wanted to do this youth programme whereby the human rights is exercised.*

Social service professionals reported that another way of promoting participation is through evaluations. This is how one participant expressed it:

SP3 *But to allow them to express themselves freely we give them evaluation forms whereby they write what they think should change or did they like the programme. If they didn't like it, what it is that they didn't like; is there a need for us to change. If you want us to change, what it is that we can change?*

The findings show that women's participation is promoted to a certain extent. This is necessary as the existing research shows that domestic violence victims are more

likely to be satisfied with the services rendered when their voices are taken into consideration (Melbin et al., 2003:3). Ife (2012:197) believes that collaboration between social service professionals and service users can ensure that people's voices on human rights are heard and from the findings, this collaboration is evident.

- **Accountability**

Androff (2016:43) states that the principle of accountability entails establishing control measures to ensure that those found guilty of violations of human rights are held accountable for their actions. The interviews showed that social service professionals are not in a position to promote principles of accountability, as the final decision to hold perpetrators accountable, lies with the victims. The role of social service professionals is limited to advising and providing the necessary support to ensure that perpetrators pay for their crimes. These are some of the expressions:

SP4 *We do empower them with that knowledge, but at the end of the day, it is their choice to open up the case. Because mostly they would tell you that no, I just want him to be aware that what he is doing to me is wrong. I don't want to have him arrested because if he gets arrested, I'm unemployed, he's the main provider. So, if he gets to jail he has a criminal record and how is it going to help my children because I have to answer to my children.*

SP6 *Well accountability it would be in there, we make sure that women are really empowered not to be cowards, to open up cases and follow it up. Because many times women do cancel, you find that you know she opens up a case and then she goes and say no, I'm cancelling it because the family says one, two, three.*

While there are instances where women do not pursue cases, there are instances where women take a stand to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. This can be seen in the following expression:

SP2 *There are those who did. There are those who did. Even now, we have one who opened a case against the perpetrator and perpetrator was arrested.*

In their role of supporting and advising the women, there is often involvement of the perpetrators, when requested by the women. This is what one social service professional had to say:

SP3 *We have so many instances where we contacted the partners. And the partners were willing to come on board. We'll have sessions with them and refer them to perpetrators programmes and what what-what yes.*

However, it is not in all the shelters where the involvement of the perpetrator is practiced. There is one shelter that does not involve perpetrators, which can be seen in the following expressions:

SP5 *And some of them when they are admitted we tell them that they should not tell the perpetrator their whereabouts. We tell her that she should not give him contact number and she must also not tell him where she is... in which place.*

SP6 *We do not communicate with him.*

Findings show that it is difficult for social service professionals to warrant accountability by ensuring that those found guilty of violations of human rights are held accountable for their actions as suggested by Androff (2016:43). There should be engagements to minimise future violations, while at the same time strengthening human rights practice (Androff, 2016:43) through involvement of perpetrators. Involvement of perpetrators has become a crucial factor in addressing the many social ills in society, including domestic violence (CSV, 2008:7). This has been partly influenced by the many cases where women preferred mediation rather than leaving the relationship (CSV, 2008:7).

- **Non-discrimination and equality**

Social service professionals highlighted that issues of non-discrimination and equality are addressed through the practice of equal treatment, fairness, and equal opportunities. Other issues that were touched on under non-discrimination and equality were race, language, religion and culture, and sexuality. This is how one social service professional expressed it:

SP6 *Like I've just mentioned that we time and again make them aware that they are all equal, no one is above the other.*

Women exposed to domestic violence alluded to equal treatment, and this is how one of them expressed it:

WP5 *The way I see it I think they treat us in the same way.*

One woman exposed to domestic violence, however, showed dissatisfaction when discussing equal treatment and had this to say:

WP4 *If they make everything actually pertaining to us they call us equal; we have to be equal no favouritism.*

With regard to fairness and equal opportunities, social services professionals stated that women are treated fairly and get equal opportunities. This was expressed as follows:

SP1 *When we do something, we don't do it with one person only.*

This is what one woman exposed to domestic violence had to say concerning fairness and equal opportunities:

WP3 *Like on Monday we are having a workshop from nine o'clock to four o'clock is early childhood development and last night the coordinator sent messages to all of us that make yourselves available it's a whole day programme.*

There are instances where some of the women exposed to domestic violence felt that the practice of fairness and equal opportunities is not always upheld. This is how one participant expressed it:

WP4 *So you find that there is no balance there are other ladies like who are given opportunities to do certain things and when it's you when you come; those opportunities are not exposed.*

Social service professionals reported that there is no discrimination when it comes to race and the issue of language is receiving special attention to accommodate everyone and avoid conflict. This can be seen in the following expressions:

SP3 *We don't discriminate. Our shelter admits all the races, and it doesn't matter which language they speak or coming from where; foreign nationals. The criteria have to be that living in South Africa being a victim of domestic violence.*

SP5 *The use of different languages often times causes conflict. They fight but since English has been adopted, it minimises occurrence of problems and also issue of doubting yourself.*

However, those who cannot speak English are also accommodated, and this can be seen in the following expression made by social service professional:

SP6 *So we make them aware that you know if you can't express yourself in English you're most welcome to do that in your own language then we interpret to others.*

One of the women exposed to domestic violence reported having a bad experience due to the issue of language. This is how she expressed it:

WP3 *... for me I feel I am out-sided because I don't speak the language. That's one of the worst things for me; you know not a racial thing, but I feel at times that it becomes racial because I don't speak the language.*

Issues of religion and culture were highlighted by social service professionals as receiving close attention in terms of inclusion and respect, as religion and culture play a major role in the lives of women exposed to domestic violence. These are some of the expressions:

SP3 *... everybody is allowed to can practice her own religion. But it shouldn't interfere with other people's their values.*

SP5 *Eh like when we are doing the life skills, we part of the... some of the topics that we cover is to let women talk about their cultures. They share about their cultures so that they tend to understand one another.*

One of the women exposed to domestic violence had this experience to share on the issue of religion:

WP2 *For now I have not experienced much except just few things that maybe because of religion because she's Muslim, I'm Christian. So there was a time where she would feel like eh if I need to pray I must go to the Chapel so I cannot wake up 2 o'clock and go to the Chapel. I used to when I was at home I will be joining with the people we will be praying at 4am so I had my alarm. So I had to stop that to accommodate her you know.*

Social service professionals reported that there has been discrimination when it comes to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI) cases. This can be seen in the following expressions:

SP7 *Uhm there was because most of the people do not know much about the LGBTI. Obvious and you know like the mother-body organisation is a faith-based, so they believe maybe it's demons or something like that. But we do like... and women also because they lacked maybe knowledge with it so they were discriminating her.*

SP4 *Within the shelter remember I gave you an incident before of one lady who is been seen like because she's a tom-boy. Because that lady was discriminated because of her sexuality. They wouldn't want to interact with her.*

Findings show that shelters promote the fundamental principle of human rights which stipulate that all people regardless of sex, age, race, gender, religion, class, sexuality, nationality, or other distinctions are entitled to enjoy human rights (Slote, Cuthbert, Mesh, Driggers, Bancroft & Silverman, 2005:1371; Ife, 2012:19). Findings show that while shelters seek to attain human rights practice by bringing equality for those who cannot speak for themselves, by eliminating any form of discrimination serving as an obstacle from realising human rights (SHRC, 2009:12), this has been met with challenges. Such challenges are seen in instances where there has been discrimination in the form of unequal treatment when coming to equal opportunities, differences in sexual orientation and differences in the language spoken.

- **Empowerment**

The interviews revealed that empowerment is taking place on diverse levels, such as through therapeutic services, skills development, job preparations, workshops, and training, as well as motivation by former clients.

The role of therapeutic services can be seen in the following expression by one social service professional:

SP5 *And when after we have spoken to them and they have received counselling and group sessions that they receive they begin to feel loved and feel that their presence is valued. They begin to see that if they do one, two, three they will be fine. Then you begin to see changes in them and things begin to be right.*

Women exposed to domestic violence alluded to empowerment through therapeutic services, and this is what one of them had to say:

WP2 *But now I've learned to find myself in some ways. But if I go out there I'm no longer expecting people to accept me for who I am unless I accept myself then I can try to move on you know.*

Social service professionals reported that empowerment through skills development often leads to employment opportunities as well as income generating activities. These are some of the expressions by social service professionals:

SP2 *Okay, as they do craft; every time they do something, they do one for themselves and one for the workshop. So, everything that they have made, we give them 25% and keep 75%. So, when they leave whatever money they have accumulated and what we have kept, they take their money with them.*

SP6 *And we had one lady she started business while she was at this shelter. She was baking, doing fat cakes. So, we bought a prima-stove for her. She would go and stand at the park there. Baking and do fat cakes and then selling them. And when she left, we gave her the prima-stove, it was her package.*

Some of the women exposed to domestic violence alluded to generating an income through their skills, and this is what one had to say:

WP1 *So, for instance if you make a pair of earrings and earrings cost...my earrings cost R 15 per pair so what happens is this, Shelter 1 takes R 5 for the costs of the earring to make it and the R 10 that is left behind the client gets it".*

Another way of empowering women is through workshops and training. This is how one social service professional expressed it:

SP2 *Some of them if someone says I want to start a selling business; like we went for a hawkers licence training somewhere in the municipal something-something. So, we wanted to understand what it is that is needed. So, if one of our ladies say I want to start a hawking business; I want to start this so if there is a certificate or licence that must be applied for; how do we apply for them.*

Women exposed to domestic violence indicated that they find workshops to be helpful. This is how one woman expressed her view:

WP4 *So but what I like about this place when I came in here I was having a trauma whereby this man was stalking me everywhere I was going. There's trauma whereby he wants to know everything about me and then eventually through their workshops; through their training; the skills; my mind setup like managed to change whereby I said to myself I don't fear anyone now but God.*

Social service professionals reported that former clients play a vital role in encouraging and empowering women. This can be seen in the following expression:

SP5 *Another thing that makes them to be empowered is when the previous clients come to the shelter. They see them when they come to visit, and the social worker or house mothers tell them that the person used to stay at the shelter. And when you ask that person how she is making a living, they will tell you that*

they are selling as a result of the skill they learned here. Yes, and they also become empowered.

One of the women exposed to domestic violence confirmed the role played by former clients by saying the following:

WP2 *Someone came and motivated us and told us that she was somehow being abused before and then through that person's testimony you can see yourself being able to move out of that eh captive like being captive. Move out from whatever it is that was affecting your life.*

The findings support the view that shelters play a vital role in empowering women to become enabled (CSVR, 2008:16). Findings show that shelters are embracing the principle of empowerment as the Department of Social Development (2013:14) stipulates that for this principle to be embraced, social welfare programmes should be people-driven and based on respect for human rights while ensuring ownership for future development. Moreover, findings confirm Lopes' (2013:5) view that shelters promote women's economic empowerment through skills development programmes.

- **Legality**

Interviews indicated that there is a number of ways in which the shelters get involved in legal matters to ensure that women enjoy equality before the law including support with court cases, access to legal information, referrals and linking them with lawyers. These are some of the expressions by social service professionals:

SP6 *As I've already said we do work with the Tuks tribunal that they are doing law and even the legal aid services in town. We are using their service because some of our women who want to pursue like divorce, they are not working. So we use the legal aid services and they've always assisted our women.*

SP3 *We refer or we get people who are expert in that field to come and those who do pro-bono; we refer them to legal aid or to pro-bono lawyers or human rights lawyers. We have access to them and then we refer our ladies there.*

One of the women exposed to domestic violence had this to say regarding legal matters:

WP4 *Like I have the lawyer. I have my own lawyer who is always... currently assisting me with both cases. So but I know that they are having legal people who are assisting with cases.*

Findings show that there are measures in place to ensure that women enjoy their right to equality before the law when their rights are infringed (UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014:109). This role is important because according to the principle of accountability, the existence and the realisation of human rights are highly dependent on the legal protection of the rights as promoted by the state (Ife, 2012:15).

Sub-theme 5.2 Role of social services profession in promoting human rights

The interviews showed that the social service profession plays a vital role in the promotion of human rights through its principles such as privacy and confidentiality, respect for worth and dignity, and the client's self-determination as upheld by the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) (2004:6). This role has been analysed in the following discussions.

- **Respect for people's worth and dignity**

Social service professionals have a vast knowledge in as far as respect for people's worth, and dignity is concerned. This is how one participant expressed it:

SP2 *Dignity is broad. It's like respect. Eh, human dignity a person is born with that. So the mere fact that you are human, other humans should see you with that dignity that you are a human being; dignity of saying you are a human being. Whether you are poor, educated, white, black, yellow. The mere fact that you are human, it has to come with that dignity because I believe that dignity you are born with it.*

The essence of the practice of worth and dignity has been captured in the following expression:

SP3 *Uhm uhm worth and dignity... and our motto says "We are here; we are rendering services to bring back self-worth of all women." That's our motto. Uhm I think self-worth is more on emotions. Because once your emotions are being... you know when they are being frustrated; you don't feel worth about yourself. You don't feel valuable. You don't feel love... you know it's more about, self-worth it's more about love, care, respect. When the person comes here obviously she has been violated emotionally like domestic violence is saying emotional abuse and what what. So in terms of the counselling sessions that we render, they are focused more on the emotions. The self-worth of the person; to uplift the person again; the self-esteem; to promote that person from deep inside.*

Women exposed to domestic violence reported having experienced respect in the manner in which they are treated. This can be seen in the following expression:

WP1 *Uhm... I never felt disrespected. I never felt judged. Sometimes I would be treated so much a woman of worth that I sometimes felt like I didn't deserve it. Uhm and that's something I needed to overcome as an individual, you know self-worth, to feel good about myself.*

- **Privacy**

The right to privacy entails the provision of an environment that ensures that service users' space cannot be invaded in a way that may risk exposure of their private information (SACSSP, 2004:15). In terms of privacy, participants indicated that the practice of privacy is encouraged but difficult to maintain because it is a communal setting. This is how one social service professional expressed it:

SP4 *You know in a commune you cannot say there is privacy. I can say the only privacy that is exercised is through counselling, the office only. But where they stay you cannot say there is privacy...*

These are some of the expressions by women exposed to domestic violence regarding the issue of privacy:

WP5 *Like sometimes you find that I am on the phone and this person wants to listen to everything I'm saying on the phone so things like that; where she also follows you so yah you understand.*

WP4 *Sometimes she brings... she brings her "voodoo" stuff and she will be busy sprinkling her things on your stuff and when you confront her and report it, the story changes when it gets to the office like there's no that privacy as such.*

- **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an assurance that information shared by service users will remain within the parameters of the service user and the social worker (SACSSP, 2004:15). Confidentiality is believed to be upheld between social service professionals and women exposed to domestic violence. These are some of the expressions by social service professionals:

SP7 *Yah I respect that, and if it's confidential I keep it confidential, same applies with the colleagues.*

SP4 *But in terms of confidentiality their files are locked in a lockable cabinet, and we took the key, and only the social workers have access to it.*

Women exposed to domestic violence attested that between them and social service professionals, confidentiality is being maintained. This can be seen in the following expression:

WP5 *Like for now what I have shared with social worker, I have not heard it from another person. It remains between us.*

However, one of the women exposed to domestic violence reported having had an unpleasant experience where a social service professional broke confidentiality. This is how she expressed it:

WP4 *You know what; to be honest with you I thought there is confidentiality... I still go for the sessions, but I know where to draw the line. There are things that... there are things that I share with her that I know that even if she shares them with others, I don't have a problem.*

One social service professional raised a concern over non-social work managers when it comes to client-social worker confidentiality. This is how she expressed it:

SP4 *But sometimes, I don't know if I should be saying this but sometimes you know when you work for an NGO even though you know that as a social worker that this is what needs to happen. Sometimes when you work for an NGO they will call you from home; "Where is the key? We need so and so's files because we want to... there is something that we need inside that file." And you when you refuse is like you're being disrespectful towards the manager. That is the problem.*

Maintaining confidentiality amongst women remains a challenge and, in most cases, lead to conflict. This is what one social service professional had to say:

SP3 *You find that they share more than they are supposed to and it results into if they have clashes later then they use information to fight one another.*

This is what one woman exposed to domestic violence had to say:

WP3 *Okay we did have... we have signed a code of conduct that guarantees you confidentiality. But sometimes you have already signed the contract, but you speak about it to your friend or your roommate and it becomes public knowledge and lead to problems.*

- **Client's self-determination**

Social service professionals reported that the client's self-determination is encouraged and supported at all times. These are some of the expressions:

SP3 *She wants to see herself somewhere. So we as an organisation we... it goes back to strengths-based like whatever she is determined to do, we work towards that. Goal setting and then we work towards that. Mm so she can reach it.*

SP7 *No like we give you the opportunity to like you know for you to show forth your determination. Like for instance you find that there is a woman who is good at fund raising then we give the platform to say help us.*

Women exposed to domestic violence reported that self-determination is encouraged, and these are some of the expressions:

WP5 *... they can say that if you have a plan to do something, they can help you. Like myself I told the social worker I want clothes because where I am coming from, I used to sell second hand clothes door to door. So social worker said she will tell them so I can go look for clothes in storage. They opened the storage and I found some clothes which I sold and made R 620.*

WP4 *And then currently then they saw the potential of loving kids, working with kids then they introduced me to this eh this studies the child and youth care work. Yes, by the social worker. She's the one who... yah like when you are in the shelter, they see actually what is it that can lift your spirit. What is it that you like and then they provide the skills...?*

The findings show that the ethical conduct for social workers fosters respect for fundamental human rights, dignity, and worth of all human beings as well as respect towards individual's privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination (SACSSP, 2004:6). The findings give a glimpse of how the social work profession, in particular, has the mandate to provide an advocacy role to ensure that practices and policies are based on respect for human rights (DeLuca-Acconi, 2016:2). This role is mandated by the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development which commits social service professionals to promote a just and fair world where dignity and worth of all the people are respected, by ensuring that human rights become a reality (IASSW, IFSW & ICSW, 2012:1). These findings bring understanding as to why Ife (2012:197) holds the view

that social workers are in an advantageous position to advocate for human rights as they work closely with disadvantaged and marginalised groups.

Findings also confirm Wronka's (2011:440) view that the social work profession has a significant role to play in the field of human rights as the two work towards a common goal, which includes empowerment, liberation, and fulfilment of human needs. It is therefore not surprising that Midgley and Conley (2010:17) argue that although human rights have not been widely emphasised in social work, many scholars have released publications alluding to the relevance of the human rights within the social work profession.

3.5 SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter was to give an overview of the research methodology followed while exploring the role of social services in shelters with regard to the promotion of human rights for women exposed to domestic violence. Discussions focused on the research approach, type of research, research design and research methods.

The second part of the chapter presented an analysis of the empirical findings. This was achieved by outlining the biographical information under Section One, followed by the empirical findings under Section Two (presented through themes and sub-themes).

This chapter will be followed by Chapter Four, which focuses on the key findings of the study, conclusions, suggestion for potential future studies and recommendations for shelters and organs of state.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The promotion of human rights is a widely embraced goal, allowing the human rights-based approach to become a useful framework in addressing gender abuse (Lockwood, 2006:57). The human rights-based approach emerged to empower people regarding their rights so they can claim and enjoy those rights (SHRC, 2009:11). The approach seeks to empower institutions and professionals responsible for upholding human rights to respect vulnerable groups and allow them to make decisions and participate in human rights activities (SHRC, 2009:11).

The study aimed to answer the following research question:

How do social services rendered in and by shelters promote the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence?

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the extent to which the goal and objectives of the study have been achieved. Key findings and literature will be discussed before reaching conclusions. Based on the key findings recommendations for the promotion of human rights will be made. Lastly, the focus will be on potential future studies informed by the findings of this study.

4.2 ACCOMPLISHMENT OF RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Since the study was undertaken with a pre-determined goal and set of objectives, this section focuses on an analysis of the goal and objectives to evaluate the extent to which the study has achieved its end goal.

4.2.1 Goal of the study

The goal of the study was to explore and discuss the role of social services in shelters in promoting the rights of women exposed to domestic violence. To achieve this goal, the relevant research methodology was envisaged and adopted. This applied research study followed a qualitative approach whereby a collective case study design was used in conducting one-to-one semi-structured interviews with 12 participants. The research objectives played a vital role in the accomplishment of the goal of the study.

4.2.2 Objectives of the study

The following objectives were formulated to reach the goal of the study:

- To contextualise the inclusion of human rights in the rendering of social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence, with specific reference to women living in shelters.
- To explore the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence on the promotion of human rights via social services rendered in shelters.
- To explore the perceptions of social service professionals on the promotion of human rights through social services.
- To explore how human rights are promoted in shelters through social services for women previously exposed to domestic violence.
- To make recommendations to social professionals rendering social services to women exposed to domestic violence from a human rights perspective.

These objectives have been achieved through the literature review as well as empirical findings discussed in Chapters Two and Three, respectively. The achievement of the objectives will be outlined as follows.

Objective 1: To contextualise the inclusion of human rights in the rendering of social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence, with specific reference to women living in shelters

To contextualise the inclusion of human rights, literature was consulted in order to obtain more information on the rendering of social services from a human rights practice perspective. The inclusion of human rights in rendering social services in the shelters was tested against holistic human rights practice and the developmental social welfare approach, as outlined in Chapter Two. The analysis was achieved by exploring the use of theories and approaches used in the delivery of social services to women exposed to domestic violence. The literature consulted was adequate to provide a theoretical framework for the study.

The rights-based approach to social welfare is not clearly recognised as a practice within the rendering of developmental social welfare services. None of the shelters use a human rights approach as a framework guiding social services.

Objective 2: To explore the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence on the promotion of human rights via social services rendered in shelters

To achieve this objective, the researcher consulted literature to better understand what it means for women exposed to domestic violence to receive services that promote human rights. Discussions with the women exposed to domestic violence thus centred around their knowledge of legislation on human rights, how services are rendered as well as their awareness of human rights since arriving at the shelter. Women exposed to domestic violence revealed that the shelters partially promote human rights through social services but not to the fullest. Basic needs are however being met; there is the provision of services for children, and an awareness of rights is fostered through life skills training, workshops, and educational activities.

The promotion of human rights is also evident through the incorporation of human rights principles (participation, accountability, discrimination and equality, empowerment, legality), but is not without challenges. These challenges revolve around issues of limited privacy, discrimination, unequal treatment, and conflict amongst women.

Objective 3: To explore the perceptions of social service professionals on the promotion of human rights through social services

In exploring the perceptions of social service professionals, the focus revolved around their understanding of human rights, human rights culture, and how human rights principles, as well as values and principles of the social service profession are promoted. Social service professionals have minimal knowledge of human rights practice. The practice of human rights is not fully comprehended as a practice model, and much of the articulation on human rights stemmed from a personal knowledge level and not a practice level. Social service professionals' responses to the question on human rights culture show that the culture of human rights within social service delivery is not strong and thus human rights practice has not been widely embraced in shelters. Moreover, there is limited vocabulary on human rights as compared to other theories and approaches used by social service professionals in rendering social services.

Objective 4: To explore how human rights are promoted in the shelters for women previously exposed to domestic violence through social services

The shelters included in the study have a wide range of human rights-based activities taking place, such as meeting of basic needs, workshops, life skills, and educational talks. The promotion of human rights is mostly seen in the manner in which principles of participation, accountability, non-discrimination, equality, empowerment, legality, respect for privacy and confidentiality, respect for worth and dignity, and client's self-determination are practiced. How social services is rendered is at times, perceived to be in violation of women's human rights in instances where participation is forced, confidentiality is broken and when a lack of respect for privacy is threatened.

Objective 5: To make recommendations to social professionals rendering social services to women previously exposed to domestic violence from a human rights perspective

The conceptualisation behind a human rights-based approach is firstly to empower individuals regarding their human rights so they can claim and enjoy those rights. Secondly, the approach seeks to empower institutions and professionals responsible for upholding human rights, respect vulnerable groups and allow them to make decisions and participate in human rights activities thereby removing barriers that hinder people from enjoying their human rights. The perceptions of social service professionals and the experiences of women exposed to domestic violence were analysed from a human rights-based perspective. Discovery during empirical findings showed that the practice of human rights is not yet fully realised in shelters. The next section will focus on the key findings derived from the study.

4.3 KEY FINDINGS

Considering theories and approaches used by shelters delivering services to women exposed to domestic violence, the human rights approach has not been embraced as required by White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997. Traditional social work theories still dominate the practice of social services in the shelters. None of the shelters use a human rights-based approach as a guiding model in their practice. This can be

viewed as a serious oversight considering that social services rendered in the shelters are seen as a response to the domestic violence phenomenon.

On the positive side, basic needs are being met, and there is also an awareness of rights through different channels such as life skills training, educational activities, and workshops. Provision of basic needs indicates that social services rendered to women exposed to domestic violence slightly promote women's human rights using shelter, food, and clothing.

Although developmental social welfare is not well comprehended on a theoretical level, there has been a shift from a traditional approach to a developmental approach to social welfare. Shelters are fusing the traditional and developmental approaches in responding to the needs of women exposed to domestic violence. This is so because services not only focus on counselling but also engage in empowerment activities that seek to change the economic status of the women.

However, there is no realisation that the developmental approach entails the inclusion of rights-based practice. In instances where human rights practice is assimilated in service delivery in shelters, it stems from social work values and principles and not necessarily from knowledge of human rights practice in its own right. The practice of human rights is only partially realised and does not take pre-eminence as a leading approach in the shelters.

There is incorporation of the six principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, and legality) guiding the practice of human rights in the delivery of social services to women exposed to domestic violence. However, this has been met with challenges such as those seen through lack of respect for privacy, breaking of confidentiality, conflict amongst women, discrimination and unequal treatment. These challenges demonstrate that the practice of human rights has not yet been realised in shelters, because in an environment where a human rights culture thrives, respect becomes a value.

The next section will draw conclusions from the key findings deriving from the role of social services in the shelters in the promotion of the rights of women exposed to domestic violence, by assimilating literature and empirical findings.

4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The literature review paved the way for an extensive understanding of the concept of human rights in the context of the shelters for women exposed to domestic violence. The literature was useful in supporting empirical findings. Conclusions are drawn from the empirical findings that were not highlighted by the literature review, to render a broader understanding of the concept of human rights within the context of domestic violence.

4.4.1 Literature review

Conclusions derived from the literature review are as follows:

- Although the term domestic violence is understood to be inclusive of violence directed towards men or women, it is mostly perpetrated by men against women. Women are far more exposed and carry a greater burden than men. Domestic violence is a growing problem, which places an affliction on the women and a heavy burden on the State. This burden persists in spite of the introduction of policies and legislation to curb it.
- While the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa saw with it the beginning of women redefining their power, domestic violence remains an obstacle that hinders women from the advancement of full power and enjoyment of human rights. Domestic violence qualifies as a violation of human rights due to the cruelty associated with the factors leading to the act, as well as its devastating consequences.
- Domestic violence is a threat to the realisation of equality, development, and peaceful societies, as it hinders women from enjoying their basic human rights and freedoms envisioned in international declarations and local legislation.
- The Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 is a progressive law that is committed to the elimination of violence by affording victims maximum protection. The Act continues to be useful in responding to the occurrence and negative effects of domestic violence. While the Act provides a clear mandate in terms of stipulating steps to be taken in protecting the victims, there are certain flaws in its implementation. One of the challenges with the Act is that the majority of victims do not know about the protection provided by the Act. There is a need therefore for awareness campaigns to reinforce protection afforded by the Act.

- The Domestic Violence Act is lacking in terms of providing tangible safety measures, as it only offers victims protection on paper in the form of a protection order. Protection orders lead to unintended consequences by putting women at more risk of violence by stimulating anger and rage in perpetrators. Another issue related to the Domestic Violence Act is that it only criminalises the violation of a protection order and not the act of domestic violence itself. The idea of protection orders remains debatable, as there is evidence from cases where the protection order yielded positive results as well as cases where it made the situation worse for the victim.
- Engagements of shelters in domestic violence awareness campaigns support a view that the civil society in South Africa is continuously engaging in the promotion of the Domestic Violence Act through public awareness and education campaigns.
- Domestic violence emanates from an interplay between several factors (such as individual, community, economic, cultural, and religious) occurring at different levels in society. The causes and factors leading to domestic violence are rooted in unequal power relations between men and women, perpetuated by systematic gender-based discrimination and various other forms of oppression against the women. As such, most women are rejected by their families when they take a stand against domestic violence.
- The impact and consequences of domestic violence are generally devastating for the survivor. The impact is far worse than the actual act of violence, leaving women with internal scars, lasting a lifetime. Physical abuse is often likely to result in mental impairment. Violence jeopardises women's ability to play a role in economic and social development by taking away their energy and bruising their confidence.
- The findings affirmed a feminist framework that stipulates that the occurrence of violence against women at diverse levels in society stems from a patriarchal setting where violence is normalised for men to preserve their privileged position.
- In an attempt to escape abuse, women end up homeless and have trouble to secure and maintain housing. There is an argument made by some social service professionals in shelters that the period of accommodation is not sufficient to prepare women to exit abusive relationships and set up new housing arrangements. The issue of housing thus calls for recognition and debate on

women's rights to housing as they experience a wide range of obstacles in attempts to secure their own space.

- Without assistance and financial support, it is almost impossible for women to leave abusive partners. Unfortunately, for most women, the fact that the perpetrators are often the sole providers has major implications on their fate especially in the absence of immediate remedial services.
- Looking at the complexity of the consequences and the impact of domestic violence, it can be understood why this form of violence is perceived as a violation of human rights and why it mainly affects women.
- Without the necessary resources such as those offered by the shelters, the promotion of human rights for abused women cannot be fully realised. In the era of emergence, the services offered by the shelters were mostly limited to the provision of beds and short-term support. At present, shelters provide services in but not limited to accommodation, psycho-social support, skills development, health, and legal matters. Moreover, shelters promote women's economic empowerment through skills development programmes. Shelters play a significant role in implementing article 25 (1) of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which advocates for basic human needs, which include shelter more especially under the circumstances beyond one's control as is the case with victims of domestic violence. The shelters are of immense help, especially those that promote sustainable exit strategies in assisting women who are trying to separate from abusive partners.
- The idea of a shelter might seem like a straightforward solution, but there are numerous challenges that women experience once they access these shelters. The most common challenges faced by the women in different shelters revolve around issues of privacy, conflict with other residents, and limits on sheltering teenaged boys.
- The involvement of perpetrators by some of the shelters serves as elimination of barriers hindering women from enjoying human rights as this kind of involvement often leads to corrective behaviour. This involvement is necessary because in most cases women return to the abusive relationship due to economic factors.
- In general, there are different rights to be enjoyed by all the people across the world such as the right to life, equality, human dignity, freedom, security, health,

education, privacy, vote, and an adequate standard of living. Women exposed to domestic violence therefore also enjoy these rights.

- There is a constant struggle to ensure that all human rights (civil, political, economic, social, and cultural) are equally guaranteed to women. The concept of human rights is yet to be widely embraced in practice.
- Despite all the efforts made through human rights declarations, there is still a concern that those who are oppressed in society always have difficulties accessing the rights guaranteed to them by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The majority of those affected are women, as they continue to hold a subordinate status in most societies.
- Further guidance is needed on the implementation of the policies and programmes to achieve integrated developmental social welfare services. This is the case because although the White Paper for Social Welfare of 1997 provides a clear guideline in terms of the policy framework, there are challenges with its implementation. South Africa's challenges in terms of implementing the policy framework which incorporates human rights, is however not surprising, as this fact was already acknowledged at the International Conference on Social Welfare in 1968, where it was stipulated that there is generally a major challenge in implementing, protecting and making human rights real in the everyday lives of the populations at risk. The biggest problem stems from the fact that there is little articulation of what it means in practice for professionals to claim that their work is based on human rights. As such, the human rights concept remains a noble idea which is largely challenged when it comes to practice.
- The social work profession, in particular, has a mandate to provide an advocacy role to ensure that practices and policies are based on respect for human rights. This role is mandated by the Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development that commits social service professionals to promote a just and fair world where dignity and worth of all the people are respected, by ensuring that human rights become a reality. Social workers are in an advantageous position to advocate for human rights as they work closely with disadvantaged and marginalised groups.
- From a human rights perspective, social service professionals are perceived as potential violators of human rights. This is so because often, in their efforts to assist

service users, the professionals impose their views on the service users without realising that their actions may violate people's rights to make their own decisions

4.4.2 Empirical findings

- Social service professionals fairly understand the term domestic violence. Domestic violence is not only perceived as a fight between intimate partners but includes that of other family members such as children abusing their parents.
- When it comes to the knowledge of the Domestic Violence Act, there are three categories. Firstly, some women are aware of the legislation, but choose not to use it for reasons such as financial support, family members and in-laws, and fear. Secondly, there are women who know about the legislation and tend to abuse it. Lastly, there are women who are not aware of the legislation. There is a general belief that it is mostly people in rural areas who lack knowledge of the Domestic Violence Act.
- Shelters are engaged in Domestic Violence Act awareness campaigns through visitations of schools, clinics, and communities. However, there is still a need for more awareness campaigns.
- There is no need to improve the Domestic Violence Act as the challenge lies with its implementation rather than its contents. Other views insinuated a need for the Act to be clear in terms of the scope of violence. The police at times refer victims of other forms of violence than domestic violence to the shelters. This becomes a challenge because shelter programmes are structured in a manner that only responds to the need of victims of violence between intimate partners. Preferably, the Act should only cover violence within a domestic setting between intimate partners while any other forms of violence such as those between parents and their children, neighbours, and property owners should have separate legislation.
- The Domestic Violence Act has unintended consequences such as misconception by the perpetrators and women who tend to abuse the legislation.
- In addition to the common factors that contribute towards domestic violence other contributing factors, including jealousy, low self-esteem, stress, lack of respect, lack of communication, children, and victims of violence.
- Women have a variety of needs such as shelter, financial support, food, clothing, and medical attention upon leaving abusive relationships. Their situation is often worsened by a lack of family support.

- Since there is no legislation regulating the shelters, intake criteria differ from shelter to shelter. There is no agreement in terms of age of admission with the challenge being on accommodation of older boys and older women. Accommodation of older women over the age of sixty years often results in a situation where older women feel alienated as the shelters are dominated by women of younger ages. The shelter set-up and environment itself does not cater to the needs of older women.
- While the period of stay in the shelters is three to six months, women at times stay longer due to struggles in finding alternative permanent accommodation.
- There is a view that the period of stay in the shelters is long and should be reduced to one to two months. Shelters should rather encourage continued support where victims will continue to receive services while they have exited the shelters, as the longer period of stay often creates dependency.
- Shelters offer exit strategies that include continued support such as aftercare services focusing on home visits, food parcels, starter packs, referrals, and telephonic interviews.
- The Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) is relevant within the context of the shelters as shelter services are working towards meeting the aim of the VEP, which is to empower the victims in such a way that they can move away from the harm caused by crime or violence by creating an environment that ensures that no further harm will be experienced.
- While the existing literature criticised the VEP for failing to attend to the needs of abused women, social service professionals reported that the VEP is relevant within the context of shelters and no dissatisfaction was reported.
- Social services in shelters are responding to the call made by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (The Maputo protocol) of 2003, as well as the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development of 1979 by working towards the advancement of human rights for women through protection of dignity, protection from all forms of violence, implementation of the legislation, policies, programmes and projects centred on women empowerment.
- With regard to the challenges faced by the women in shelters, conflict amongst women and lack of privacy were reported in all the shelters. Challenges of harsh

treatment by some of the social service professionals, as well as inadequate clothing and clothing in bad condition, were mentioned as challenges in one shelter while in another shelter the opposite was reported.

- Women are generally satisfied with the services that they are receiving. In terms of the improvements, there is a need for more counselling and empowerment opportunities in one shelter while in another shelter the two were reported to have been sufficient.
- The concept of human rights is understood in terms of theoretical articulation but is not at the centre of practice in the shelters.
- The majority of women exposed to domestic violence are not aware of the legislation guiding human rights in South Africa. In terms of the knowledge of the human rights women are entitled to in South Africa, there are three categories. There are women who know about their entitlements; women who do not know especially those in rural areas; and women who choose not to know being those in urban areas where there is access to information.
- The concept of human rights culture is not well understood in the shelters.
- There are different human rights activities taking place in the shelters through educational activities, life skills, workshops, and meeting of basic needs.
- Domestic violence violates women's human rights in a number of ways such as through physical, emotional, and financial abuse. There are also instances where a violation of human rights has taken place within the shelters. Victims of human rights violations, in this context abused women, are potential violators of human rights as the findings indicated that in some cases women were discriminated against by other women due to differences in sexuality as well as women who speak a different language to the majority.
- The term "developmental approach to social welfare services" is not fully comprehended in terms of theoretical understanding, but it is partially evident in practice. However, the rights-based approach is not realised as a component of a developmental approach.
- Social service professionals are mostly using traditional theories, rather than developmental approaches that are pro-human rights.
- There are some ways in which human rights principles (participation, accountability, non-discrimination and equality, empowerment, legality) are

promoted in the shelters through social services. However, this has been met with the challenges which include limitations in decision-making, limitations when it comes to the principle of accountability, reported discrimination and unequal treatment.

- It is not in all the shelters where perpetrators become part of the healing process. While two shelters promote the involvement of the perpetrators, there is one shelter where such involvement is not permitted.
- The social service profession plays a vital role in the promotion of human rights through its principles such as confidentiality, respect for the worth and dignity of people and the client's self-determination.

This completes the conclusions of the study section. The recommendations will be discussed in the next section.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations made are derived from key findings as well as conclusions informed by the literature review and empirical findings.

4.5.1 Recommendations for social service professionals

Recommendations for social service professionals are as follows:

- The new direction taken by the White Paper on Social Welfare Services required a paradigm shift in social service delivery from a social treatment model to a developmental service delivery model (Patel, 2015:196). Under this new direction, the services rendered to populations at risk should adopt a rights-based approach by incorporating human rights values and principles into service delivery methods and strategies (Patel, 2015:198-199). Although social services in the shelters shifted from a traditional to a developmental approach through empowerment, the concept of a rights-based approach has not been fully realised. Social service professionals should adopt a human rights-based approach as a framework guiding the services. Beyond workshops and training, a human rights culture should be practiced through verbalisation of human rights language on a day-to-day basis. This is important because Wronka (2011:443) believes that the more human rights are being discussed, the better as this may lead to a much-needed human rights culture that will foster implementation of the conventions and treaties.

- The adoption of feminist social work practice as a lens to understand and confront societal structures that perpetuate violence against women is necessary. Adoption of feminism as an ideology is required because this framework responds to the issues affecting women by challenging the state of affairs related to their oppression through aiming to change it and replace it with a more equitable social order (Inglis & Thorpe, 2012:235).
- Shelters should intensify the involvement of perpetrators and do so within the parameters of the feminism framework agenda (CSV, 2008:7).
- Since it was revealed that services at times violate women's human rights, the practice of critical reflective social work is vital within the context of the shelters to bring awareness when there is the occurrence of such violations. Reflecting on practice opens up the possibility of uncovering many underlying assumptions that directly influence and inform social work practice (Morley, 2001:300). Gaining this insight allows practitioners to consciously change their practice to be more in line with their desired ideological framework or intentions (Morley, 2001:300). This is important for any organisation that seeks to promote human rights, as Ife (2012:233) states that from a human rights perspective, social service professionals are perceived as potential violators of human rights. A process of critical reflection will, therefore, enable social service professionals to guard against their actions that hinder the practice of human rights.
- Social service professionals should take on an advocacy role to speak against the violation of women's human rights resulting from social services while at the same time guarding against violations from their side.
- Both the annual South African Human Rights Day and the International Human Rights Day taking place on the 21st of March and 10th of December respectively should be turned into an annual human rights promotion event where shelters for women exposed to domestic violence can present their agenda on the advancement of human rights for women exposed to domestic violence. Experts in the field of human rights such as representatives from academia, lawyers for human rights and other stakeholders with similar interests should form part of this event. Reflection should be done on how South Africa is progressing in terms of human rights treaties and conventions in relation to the role played by shelters in the promotion of human rights.

- Formation of stakeholder forums comprising of shelters for women exposed to domestic violence and other relevant departments such as the Department of Social Development, Department of Justice, and the South African Police should be included to advance the human rights agenda.
- Shelters should liaise with construction companies to create economic opportunities with cooking skills by supplying mobile food services at construction sites. By so doing, the services will be integrating the social and economic development of the women by producing tangible improvements in women's welfare (Midgley & Conley, 2010:12).
- There should be an expansion of skills by not only focusing on traditional gender skills, as there are women who have interests in areas such as, for example, mining. Shelters should network with private companies who can take women with such interests under their wing and provide them with the necessary support as part of Commercial Social Responsibility. This move is important because the rate of domestic violence in the country is high and if all the women in shelters are only exposed to traditional skills, the supply will be more than the demand, resulting in a narrow market for the women to generate an income.

4.5.2 Recommendations for organs of the state

- The government should make provision for the accommodation of male children of all ages, as the current shelter set-up cannot cater to this group. This form of exclusion hinders male children from enjoying equal rights enjoyed by their female counterparts.
- There must be legislation in place to regulate shelters. Such legislation should address issues of accommodation of male children and be clear in terms of cut off age when it comes to abused women as the environment of the shelters is not user-friendly when it comes to older persons.
- Since shelters for domestic violence are mostly catering for women who have experienced physical abuse and there is already existence of centres for rape victims already exist, there is a need for services for victims of emotional abuse within the domestic violence context. These kinds of services can be rendered through day-to-day domestic violence service centres, as emotional abuse puts a strain on women and is at times followed by physical abuse. These kinds of services can minimise the occurrence of physical abuse as victims can be

empowered with the necessary information and support to exit before the situation escalates to physical violence. There should be awareness campaigns on emotional abuse as a form of abuse that exists in its rank so that women can know where to access the services and not wait until the occurrence of physical abuse.

- The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) housing scheme should reprioritise housing for women, as research shows that abused women are likely to suffer from homelessness when escaping abuse. There should be a link between the Department of Housing and shelters for women exposed to domestic violence to find a way to accelerate the provision of RDP houses for women who desire to leave abusive relationships but have no alternative housing.
- There should be more awareness campaigns on domestic violence and human rights, especially in rural areas, through the collaboration of the Department of Education, the South African Police Service, Department of Social Development, and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs.

4.5.3 Recommendations for future research studies

Based on the findings, future research studies can explore the following areas:

- The role of social services in the promotion of human rights for women exposed to domestic violence in the context of rural areas.
- The perceptions of traditional leaders on domestic violence as a violation of women's human rights.
- The impact of shelter exclusion of older boys exposed to domestic violence on the boys and their mothers.
- The experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) people in domestic violence shelters within the human rights context.
- The experiences of older women in shelters for women exposed to domestic violence within the human rights context.

4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study explored and described the role of social services in shelters in the promotion of human rights for women exposed to domestic violence. It is evident from the study that social services are rendered in a manner that upholds human rights practice. However, the culture of human rights is not yet fully realised, and much of

practice stems from values and principles of the social work profession, rather than an understanding of human rights practice as existing in its own right.

Similar research can be conducted in other regions, especially rural areas, as the practice of human rights within the context of domestic violence requires much more attention.

The researcher believes that the research question “How do social services in the shelters promote human rights for women exposed to domestic violence” was sufficiently addressed by the research study supported by achievements of the goal and objectives of the study, indicated under paragraphs 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 of this chapter.

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APPENDIX A – INFORMED CONSENT LETTER



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Social Work & Criminology

APPENDIX A

14/03/2019

Our Ref: Obakeng Mokoape

Tel: (012) 359 3498

E-mail: Baki.Mokoape@gmail.com

INFORMED CONSENT

1. Title of the study: The role of social services in shelters in promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence

2. Purpose of the study

To explore and discuss the role of social services in shelters in promoting the rights of the women who were exposed to domestic violence. The study research seeks to make a contribution towards implementation of a rights-based approach as it is reported that the Social Welfare Framework in South Africa has been met with challenges when it comes to its implementation.

3. Procedures

The research takes place over a period of two years. During that time, the researcher will visit me for one interview which will last for about 120 minutes.

Participation involves being interviewed by a researcher from University of Pretoria using an interview schedule to guide the proceedings. Notes will be written during the interview. A digital voice recorder will be used during the interview. If I do not want to be recorded, I will not be able to participate in the study.

4. Risks

I am fully aware that any social science research has a potential of evoking emotional or physical harm. It has been explained to me that if anything happens, therapeutic services will be readily available. Services will be rendered by Department of Social Development,

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomo

Statutory Unit situated at 263 Thabo Sehume Street, Pretoria Central. The Unit is headed by Ms. Ida Strydom who can be contacted on 012 359 3300.

5. Benefits

I understand that the study will assist the social service professionals to render services of quality to women in promoting human rights in shelters.

6. Participants' rights

I understand that my participation in the research is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw or discontinue with participation at any given time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study, no one in the shelter has the right to know my reasons unless I otherwise decide so.

I understand that the discussions will be interesting. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer the question or to end the interview.

7. Confidentiality

I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secured. Subsequent use of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals.

The management and other social service professionals in the shelter will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This will prevent my individual comments from having any negative consequences.

I understand that information shared by myself will be destroyed should I withdraw from the study.

8. Access to the researcher

I understand that should I have any issue as a result of my participation in the study, I will be able to access the researcher on the following contact number 0735017188 and e-mail address Baki.Mokoape@gmail.com

9. Data storage

I understand that a research report on the findings will be submitted to the Department of Social Work and Criminology of the University of Pretoria upon completion of the study.

The data collected will be stored at the Department of Social Work and Criminology for 15 years and will be stored on a CD.

10. Data usage

I understand that data will be used for Masters dissertation purposes.

Signed on(date) at (place)

Signature of respondent/participant

Signature of researcher

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

PART A: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS (WOMEN)

Period of stay at the shelter to date	Age	Race	language	Economic status

PART B: THEMES

SOCIAL SERVICES RENDERED BY THE SHELTER

- Kinds of services received in the shelter
- The needs of women in shelters
- Opportunities that may open up for women after receiving social services
- Experiences of women in the shelter

HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICE

- Understanding/comprehension of human rights
- Awareness of human rights women in SA are entitled to

HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERIENCE

- Participation in activities
- Manner in which services are being rendered to women with regards to
Non-discrimination, Human dignity; Respectfulness:

APPENDIX C – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

APPENDIX C

PART A: IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS

1. Position of interviewee at organisation:.....
2. Qualification:.....
3. Number of years in rendering social services:
4. Race.....
5. Age group:

22 – 28	29 - 35	36 - 42	43 - 49	50 - 55
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6. Gender:

M	F
---	---

PART B: THEMES

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Understanding of the term domestic violence
- Common contributing factors leading to domestic violence
- Legislation - Domestic violence Act 116
 - Positive sides of the Act
 - Negative sides of the Act
- Ways to improve the legislation
- Women's understanding of the legislation

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Nature of services being rendered
- Approach or theories utilised and their relevance to addressing domestic violence
- Policies guiding the services
- The exit strategy for the women that stay at the shelter

HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICE

- Understanding of the term developmental social welfare approach
- Relevance of the developmental social welfare approach in the shelter's practice

- Understanding of human rights practice
- Domestic violence' implications for women's human rights
- *Theory of feminism believes that women are the most oppressed in society as compared to men; leading to injustices and in particular violation of human rights against women. What is your comment on this statement?*

HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION IN SHELTERS

- Human rights activities/interventions
- Human rights principles and standards guiding the principles:

Participation

Accountability

Non-discrimination

Equality

Empowerment

Legality

APPENDIX D – PERMISSION LETTER – BETH-SHAN

Beth-shan
012-787-NPO
Shelter for female victims of
Domestic violence & Human Trafficking



P.O. Box 4357
Pretoria
0001
012 379 6671
Fax: 086 754 4298
Email:
tsabethshan@telkomsa.net

Ref: Obakeng Mokoape
Student number: 04421299

Dear Obakeng

RE: Letter of permission for research study

This is to inform you that your request to conduct research at our organisation under the topic “The role of social services in shelters in promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence” has been granted. You can contact us with regard to the dates and times of the interviews so that proper arrangements can be made.

Please feel free to contact the organisation for more information.

Thank you

Mildred Ramadikela
(SW).

APPENDIX E – PERMISSION LETTER – MERCY HOUSE



TEL: (012) 329-6682/5528

FAX: (012) 329-4018

MERCY HOUSE
(014-682 NPO)

407 FLOWERS STREET
CAPITAL PARK
P. O. BOX 24279
GEZINA
PRETORIA 0031

13 February 2018

Ms Obakeng Mokoape Student no: 04421299
University of Pretoria
Pretoria

Dear Ms Mokoape

RE: RESEACH STUDY PERMISSION

This letter serves as confirmation that Mercy House grants you permission to carry out your research studies on “The role of social services in shelters in promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence” at Mercy House.

We hope that your research will benefit the victims and the shelters in the future.

Yours sincerely

Sr Colleen Wilkinson

Sr Colleen Wilkinson
Director – Mercy House Manager

APPENDIX F – PERMISSION LETTER – TSHWANE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION



TSHWANE LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION

Working with Churches and Communities for Urban Transformation

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP
AND RESOURCES FOR

WOMEN & GIRLS IN CRISIS

CHILD PROTECTION AND
DEVELOPMENT

HOMELESSNESS

HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

URBAN MINISTRY FORMATION

ADVOCACY

DIRECTORS:

WILNA DE BEER (CEO)

TINUS NIENABER

(CHAIRPERSON)

JOEL MAYEPHU

LUKAS VAN DER MERWE

FLORINCE NORRIS

PETER MARUPING

OCTAVIA EPHRAIM

DON MCDUGALL

THE JUBILEE CENTRE
288 BURGERSPARK LANE
PRETORIA-CENTRAL

P O BOX 11047
THE TRAM SHED
PRETORIA
0126

TEL: (012) 320 2123
FAX: (086) 679 9239
info@tlf.org.za
www.tlf.org.za

NPO no. 028-040-NPO

Reg. No. 2013 / 034434 / 08

PBO No: 930 045 091

ESTABLISHED IN 1993 AS
PRETORIA COMMUNITY
MINISTRIES

Tshwane Leadership Foundation

288 Burger's Park Lane

05 April 2018

Ref: Ms. Obakeng Mokoape

Student Number: 04421299

University of Pretoria

Dear Ms. Mokoape

Re: Permission to conduct research study

Permission is hereby granted for you to undertake research study titled "The role of social services in shelters in promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence" at Tshwane Leadership Foundation.

Looking forward to working with you.

Regards,

Mrs Ntakirutimana Vestine

Co Women and girls

Tshwane Leadership Foundation

Email: vestine@tlf.org.za

Tel: 0123202123ordinator

*We see healthy and vibrant communities
flourishing in God's presence.*

APPENDIX G – ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities
Research Ethics Committee

27 June 2018

Dear Ms Mokoape

Project: The role of social services in shelters promoting the human rights of women exposed to domestic violence
Researcher: O Mokoape
Supervisor: MS C van der Berg
Department: Social Work and Criminology
Reference number: 04421299 (GW20180517HS)

Thank you for your response to the Committee's letter of 31 May 2018.

I have pleasure in informing you that the Research Ethics Committee formally **approved** the above study at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 27 June 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof K Harris
Acting Chair: Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za

cc: Dr C van der Berg (Supervisor)
Prof A Lombard (HoD)

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe
Lefapha la Bomotheo

Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fasselt; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa